





# REBIRTH: HOW A LOSER BECAME A PRINCE CHARMING

BOOK 07

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EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

# Rebirth: How A Loser Became A Prince Charming

(重生之抠脚大汉变男神)

by

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# Synopsis

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Qin Guan was reborn and sent back to his final semester in High School 18 years ago.

Getting a second chance at life, he works hard to turn things around and eventually become a Prince Charming.

What will his life be like the second time around? What will he have to go through?

How will he succeed in turning from a loser into a Prince Charming?

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# Chapter 601: The Opening Show

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The assistants were chattering in low voices. Only Sister Xue knew the truth. The makeup artist had to spend one hour on other models' faces, but Qin Guan's took her only 10 minutes. That was one of the advantages of having a perfect face.

That was also why he took his time.

When he went out of the fitting room, he saw the air around him stand still. Everyone passing by slowed down and regarded him seriously, as if they had seen their superior and wanted to impress them.

Sister Xue looked at Qin Guan's outfit. So Milan favors the classic style? The autumn-winter collection of the Armani Haute Couture looked regal.

The dark blue narrow squash hat he was wearing was a favorite of gentlemen. His white shirt was decorated with black buttons, and his white waistcoat in combination with the hat made the coat look amazing.

His pants were loose, unlike the rest of his clothes, which were fitting. There was also a gap between the bottom of Qin Guan's pants and his shoes. As a result, his strict business suit looked yuppie.

A pair of soft black calfskin shoes with raised toe caps completed the outfit. Everything looked fine and elegant.

Qin Guan was like a magnet attracting public attention. He and his outfit had become one.

The top models went out of the fitting rooms one after the other and gathered in the waiting area backstage.

The industry was based on people's desire to be compared to a higher class. Therefore, the practitioners were always comparing themselves to each other in their minds.

Complex ideas were clashing in that small area. A long line formed gradually behind Qin Guan, but he stood still.

He was not pleased by external gains or saddened by personal losses.

That explained why he had become the favorite of most top brands in a year. He looked outstanding amid all the other models.

The style of Armani Haute Couture was perfect for ordinary people. It seemed like an oasis among the other avant-garde outfits.

The control and regulation assistant focused on the indicator light beside the entrance. Because of the high-quality acoustic isolation of the facility, he had to rely on that light.

The green light went on as the music started playing.

"Attention, everyone! When the door opens, get on the stage according to the set order. I have no interest in your personal feelings or disputes. Just cheer up for the show! I repeat, do not try to compete with each other!"

The director was always good-tempered before the models. He had the support of the organizing committee to back him up.

Qin Guan and a female model exchanged a meaningful look. They would be the first to get on the stage.

They walked in two parallel lines that would meet in the end. Qin Guan was walking shoulder to shoulder with the French girl next to him.

They had never cooperated with each other before, or even rehearsed, but they were both very skilled.

Blue, black, bright red and charming purple... Their outfits created a sharp contrast.

They reached together the most significant part of the stage. Qin Guan was a gentle but heartless traveller, and the girl was the

scenery line that failed to match his speed.

The two of them turned around and parted ways without hesitation. Their silent performance elevated the opening show to a higher level. The models behind them were cursing silently. Could you please think of us? Not all top models can handle this situation!

Reality proved them right. The audience didn't pay attention to the next models. The spectators were disappointed by their performance and shocked by the inferior quality of the show.

The models returned to the backstage area angrily. Before they could do anything to the Asian model though, they watched the director explain the following process to Qin Guan nervously. The proud model was changing clothes calmly.



# Chapter 602: The Crackpot Attack

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Qin Guan affected everyone around him. The models calmed down and got to work orderly.

He handed his suit to the assistant with a strict expression. Nothing could affect him. He was always concentrated on his job.

The male models were looking at him with mixed emotions. He was close to them, but they felt as if he was far away.

"What's the matter?"

His voice sounded like pearls falling on a jade plate. He looked at them with a polite smile.

"Nothing, just take a look..." they answered together, beckoning at him. Their anger dispersed like smoke.

"Let me know if I can help. We'll be working together at the end of the show after all..."

Qin Guan pointed to Sister Xue with a friendly smile. "She will be here, even if I'm not."

Sister Xue forced a smile. Silly boy! Just do your own work, okay?

During the past few years, Sister Xue had been following Qin Guan all over the world. She had forgotten that this was a top show and those troublemakers were all talented models that she used to look up to.

Qin Guan went into an empty fitting room as Sister Xue talked and exchanged cards with other agents. Just when everyone thought that the show would come to a quiet end though, something unexpected happened.

The closing show would take place in the reverse order of the opening show, so Qin Guan could chat with his female partner as he waited for his turn. The model was a naughty French girl with

black hair and freckles. She was a model for Valentino.

Her name was Rubi, which sounded as pretty and soft as a fawn. Qin Guan liked the girl, who was six years younger than him.

"Qin Guan! Rubi!"

"We are coming!" Rubi parted ways with Qin Guan at the exit.

Music started playing. As they walked on the long runway, one of them was on the left and the other was on the right. The small doors opened and they walked to the small square.

The square was used for publicity events during the Fashion Week. On the first day of the Fashion Week, the opening ceremony was held there. The models before them were walking back to the backstage area under the watchful eye of the media and the audience.

As the best of the best, Qin Guan and Rubi had to appear on the square.

"Ah!" Screams rose one after the other like a wave as the reporters tried to find the best spot to take pictures.

There was a security guard standing every couple of meters. They all seemed nervous as the closing show progressed.

Suddenly, the crowd near Rubi grew agitated. A man in a windcoat jumped over the fence and rushed up to the T stage. The man, who looked like a lunatic, unfastened the belt around his waist and threw it in the air. He was only wearing a pair of shorts under his coat!

By then, Qin Guan was standing at the front of the stage with Rubi. The man was getting closer to them.

Help! A crackpot!

Roaring, the man climbed up on the stage like a monkey.

Everyone was shocked. In a moment, the gorgeous show had turned into a farce. Time paused as the whole audience focused on

the naked man.

The man was running with his arms open, as if he was about to hug his sweetheart.

"Darling, I'm coming! I've loved you since the first time I saw you..."

"Help!" Rubi cried out. The man was really close to them.

Qin Guan stopped performing and rushed over to the crazy man. When he was close enough, he used his strength.

# Chapter 603: A Mistake

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Qin Guan leapt into the sky, his shoe sole getting closer and closer to the crazy man.

Bang! He stamped the man's face, who flew backwards with a happy expression on his face.

After hitting his target, Qin Guan landed back on the stage and kneeled in an elegant manner. He had put an end to the incident.

"Well done, Qin Guan!"

"I love you, Qin Guan!"

"I want a chance to save a beauty too!"

The security guards finally came back to their senses. Streaking in a football court was done for freedom and streaking on a rugby field was done for courage, but streaking on a T stage was disgusting.

Two strong men in black suits ran to the stage. In the meantime, the man, who had been lying on his back, jumped up with an elated expression on his face.

"Ho ho..."

He stretched his arm out to Qin Guan and Rubi. The girl kept grabbing Qin Guan's coat to stop him from hitting the man again.

"Let me go! Go back to the backstage area! I'll teach him a lesson!"

Qin Guan was still on guard. When he saw the two strong men rush over though, he let out a long sigh of relief. See? That's the difference between Cong Nianwei and other women. She would have left as soon as possible without hesitation.

The crazy man was doomed. The two security guards ran over to him and caught him.

"We are safe, Rubi! Let me go!"

Suddenly, Rubi's arms wrapped around his waist. Meanwhile, the man grabbed his pant legs.

"Ha ha! I got Qin Guan! I got him!"

When he was pulled away by the security guards, he kissed the hand that had been holding Qin Guan's pants.

"Qin Guan, I love you! I can die without regrets now..."

Rubi craned her neck around Qin Guan. What a mistake! Everybody had thought that the crazy man had been after the girl, but he was actually Qin Guan's admirer!

Qin Guan turned to Ruby with a sigh. "You heard him, right? Let me go!"

Rubi smiled shyly and ran back to the backstage area without looking back. The reporters had already started to approach them.

"Qin Guan, what's your opinion on the accident?"

"Qin Guan, look at me! Can you smile?"

"Qin Guan, are you satisfied with the security at the Fashion Week? Do you feel the enthusiasm of the Italian public?"

Qin Guan was speechless as they asked him questions amid the flashing lights. That was not on his schedule. He never did anything without getting paid. He fixed his suit and gestured at the stupefied host.

"What are you doing? Put some music on!"

"Okay, okay..."

Holding the microphone in his hand, the host pressed some buttons in a hurry. In a few seconds, an exciting song filled the square.

Qin Guan didn't say anything. He just shot a steady look at the audience, turned around without hesitation and returned to the backstage area. His straight back was his farewell to the audience.

A woman almost fainted at the sight.

On his way back, all the designers and VIPs of the fashion circle stood up one after the other to greet him. The highest honor for a top model was not their perfect appearance, their wonderful figure or wearing Haute Couture. It was this.

Everyone admired the personal integrity of a model and their ability to finish a performance under any circumstances. Qin Guan knew that he was the only one on the stage, so he was responsible for everyone. Some other celebrities had forgotten what had made them successful.

# Chapter 604: Gunpowder Smoke

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A worried Sister Xue welcomed Qin Guan to the backstage area. The two of them burst into laughter.

"Ha ha..."

Giorgio Armani was smiling in a corner with his hands behind his back. "Draw up Qin Guan's contract in advance! It seems that we will have to fight over him with other brands during the next year..." he told his assistant before leaving.

He shot a meaningful look at Channel. That shameless woman was fond of undermining others.

The old man with the moustache from Hermes teased the unhappy Gucci director.

"I hear that Qin Guan is not interested in your collection. Thank you so much for giving me this chance. Believe me, sheepskin can also be sold at high prices. Did you know that we are breeding crocodiles in Africa? Nowadays, only an idiot would stay in the eye of the storm. Ha ha!"

The Gucci director hummed loudly at his old opponent. Our show is tomorrow. You'll see the passion of our customers. Only silly people are fooled by your sheepskin.

The incident ended without any trouble. Some capable internet users had taken photos of the crazy man. A photo in which Qin Guan was stamping on his face was uploaded on OMG and shared online fast.

"He is also a martial artist!"

"Does he save others or just himself?"

Cong Nianwei laughed happily as she read the posts. Her boyfriend was always a source of entertainment, even when he was away.

Qin Guan was the winner of that unexpected spectacle. People had seen his value during that incident. As night fell, the PR departments of different brands tried to contact his team. The early bird caught the worm after all.

His team received numerous ambassador contracts, professional offers, designer invitations and advertisement deals. As his exclusive designer, Yin Changtao was now under the spotlight. Both he and his designs were waiting for the test of the Milan fashion circle.

Even though Qin Guan was the reason for all this, he still had to stick to his schedule.

"You have a lot of work tomorrow. I suggest you get some sleep now."

His assistant closed the door without hesitation. Two security guards temporarily assigned by the organizing committee were standing outside his room.

Qin Guan felt as if he was under witness protection. The accident was an embarrassment for the organising committee, so they were very grateful for Qin Guan's brave actions.

Despite the beautiful night, Qin Guan had to abandon his plan of enjoying some delicious food outside. He surrendered to his fate and fell asleep as soon as he went to bed.

After the Armani Haute Couture show, he was invited as a special guest to the Gucci press conference. He was wearing a mysterious Chinese outfit again. The fitting design looked very fashionable on him.

Qin Guan was bored to death during the fur show. When someone took the seat beside him though, he held his yawns back. It was Giorgio Armani himself.

"Hi, sir. I see you have come here personally."

The old man smoothed down his grey hair calmly.



"My old friend invited me. He wanted to hear my opinion on the collection. This is Gucci's most gorgeous and most expensive collection after all. He wants to show off his high-end concept to me and laugh at the principles of the last generation."

Qin Guan felt awkward. The designers of the last generation were competing against each other.

What Giorgio said next astonished him though.

"I'm also here for our exclusive model..."

Wow! I am so grateful for this honor...

"2003 has come to an end. I can't have you stolen from me during the new year..."

# Chapter 605: A Red-Haired Girl In A Bikini

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"We have sent the new contract to your team. I hope that you will give us priority. People are inclined to work with acquaintances in the fashion circle after all. Besides, there is always affection among us humans. If you maintain your professionalism and our brand remains a suitable platform for you, I would like to continue our cooperation."

Armani spoke neither too fast nor too slow. His sincere words moved Qin Guan.

"You are definitely my priority. Chinese people always show their gratitude, and your help and encouragement has given me a new life..."

The two of them shook hands. Armani was a kind old man who liked to help young people, and Qin Guan was a promising, grateful young man.

The warm scene didn't last long though. The music was still echoing around the square.

"Let's enjoy the show, shall we?"

Several girls went out one after the other. The first eight girls were fair-skinned Europeans wearing colorful furs. The furs included fox, mink and other animals.

After that group came some black beauties. They were as black as Qin Guan's neighbor Coulibaly, and all of them were renowned beauties in Africa.

They were wearing zebra, leopard and tiger skins.

When the last group of models came out, Qin Guan saw some familiar faces.

Du Juan and Lv Yan had been assigned to the Gucci show by the organizing committee. All six Asian models were wearing deerskin

and chamois skin. Qin Guan held his breath.

According to Sister Xue, Gucci had been one of the first brands to send him a contract for the next year. Qin Guan looked at their collection and threw the contract away.

He wanted to cooperate with old Giorgio Armani for another year. I better keep some distance from that brand.

The collection met the demands of high-end customers though. Orders started flooding the box, making the assistant smile with joy.

Gucci had captivated the hearts of rich people obsessed with the beauty of nature.

Hunters in Kansas liked to hang stag heads and antlers on the doors of their houses. Those noble ladies had a similar sense of taste.

Clothing was a way of showing off, and the best choice was to select original materials.

After the conference, Qin Guan and Armani left together talking happily. They paid no attention to the Gucci director, who was shooting proud looks at them.

Most of the audience was leaving the site while talking about the collection. The gate opened. Outside was a small square with a round fountain. The parking lot was right across the street.

People paused there and said goodbye to each other. Suddenly, a sharp sound interrupted them.

The reporters and the photographers turned around to find the origin of the sound. The security guards also became alert.

It was a shabby truck with a large container at the back that stood out against the luxurious cars and well-dressed guests.

The truck pulled up to the square and a red-haired girl in a bikini opened the door and got out. The girl, who had a cigarette in her

mouth, was wearing high-heels.

She lit the cigarette and took a deep breath.

A shaky smoke ring flew out of her mouth. Everyone on the square felt attracted to the strange girl.

"Cool! Let's get to work!"

The girl seemed to come back to life as she walked over to the container. She used one of her feet to stomp on the fence and the other to open the door of the container.

Crack!

The door opened and light poured into the dark container.

# Chapter 606: Showdown

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"Time for work, girls!" the red-haired girl shouted at the mysterious container as young girls started jumping out one after the other.

Brunettes and redheads, white girls, black girls and Asians... There were dozens of girls in the trunk. They were all wearing bikinis that revealed their smooth skin and energetic limbs and holding large paper boards and small buckets.

They were standing in two rows with a brave expression on their faces.

"Fight for the animals!" the redhead roared, as if a battle horn had been blown. Her voice echoed around the small square.

Giorgio Armani caught hold of Qin Guan's sleeve.

"Things will get dangerous! Run!"

Qin Guan had no idea what was going on, but following their seniors' orders was a natural instinct for Chinese people.

"What's happening?"

Qin Guan supported Armani as he shot a look at Sister Xue's sneakers. Smart woman!

"They are protesters from an animal protection organization. Every year they show up here for the fur exhibitions. Someone must have leaked some internal information about Gucci's press conference. They seem well-prepared. Just look at all these props and uniforms!"

"We have to get away before they notice us. If we are spotted here, the reporters will be over the moon. Those conceited, self-righteous men will start cursing your ancestors!"

It was certainly an unexpected calamity.

Sister Xue grimaced as she walked along the wall with them.

"There are only a few of them. We have security personnel here. This is pointless. They just want to become famous!"

Suddenly, they heard screams around them. The girls were throwing animal blood at the crowd. The buckets of blood smelled like urine.

Some unlucky women got wet.

The photographers looked mad with joy as they recorded the disaster with their cameras. Sister Xue shivered in the warm autumn day.

"Let's go quickly!"

They had no time to look around them. They just followed Armani across the street, the small group standing out among the crowd. The fashion godfather always stood out among ordinary people, and so did Qin Guan.

"Look! Who are they?"

"It's Qin Guan! Is he the mastermind behind this?"

You've made a big mistake! Animals might not like me, but I've never hurt them!

"Go, girls! Give them a lesson!"

Before the security guards could arrive, the girls turned spontaneously in a different direction.

"Run!"

Qin Guan suddenly became the girls' new target. He could actually take advantage of his long legs and escape, but if he did that, Armani would get caught by those crazy girls. If someone hit him on the head with a board, Qin Guan would be considered a sinner in the fashion circle.

Feeling inspired, Qin Guan rushed over to Armani and crouched before him.

"Hold on to me! Let's go!"

Before Armani could come back to his senses, he was already on Qin Guan's back, the two of them walking away fast.

"Look! What a perfect picture!"

"Did you take one?"

The reporters were attracted by the sight of the top model carrying the designer on his back as he ran.

"I took one!"

"Let me see!"

"It's f\*cking perfect! You could participate in the international figure photography exhibition!"

"You did it, bro!"

Sister Xue was shocked. Did those two abandon us?

# Chapter 607: Surrounded

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They had no time to think as their pursuers got closer and closer. All they could do was rely on themselves.

Qin Guan reached the parking lot and started pulling the doors of luxury cars open one after the other. They were not safe yet. It was actually easier to get caught in the empty parking lot.

Crack!

Qin Guan opened a Rolls Royce. He had no time to look at the people inside. He just turned around and pushed Armani in the car.

"Stay here, sir. I have to save the others!"

Then he rushed back to Sister Xue and Yin Changtao without looking back.

Armani didn't come back to his senses until he sat back against the soft leather seat. I'm safe! He straightened his suit and sized up the owner of the car, who was sitting next to him in the backseat.

"Armani, how are you?" A big hand with a black-gem ring was stretched out towards him.

"Do you know me?"

"You are the pride of Italy and the godfather of fashion. As a godfather from Sicily, I have been looking forward to meeting you for a long time."

Salvador shook hands with Armani, giving him a classic coquettish smile. By then, Qin Guan had returned to the square and found it in utter disorder.

"Sister Xue! Yin Changtao! I'm here! Run!"

Taking advantage of his height, Qin Guan found Sister Xue and Yin stumbling in the crowd. The bikini fighters were chasing the flustered crowd like zombies. Thanks to Yin's colorful outfit, Qin



Guan was able to spot them easily.

"It's Qin Guan! He's back!"

"Come on, fighters!"

The girls were followed by some angry security guards and cunning reporters.

I'm their target again. Am I the BOSS in a game or something?

Speechless, Qin Guan squeezed into the crowd and rushed over to Sister Xue.

"What are you doing? Run!"

Sister Xue and Yin run up to him in surprise. A girl was chasing them closely.

"Watch out!" Qin Guan had no time to warn them. He just took action immediately.

He lifted both of them on his shoulders with a roar.

"Hold on to me!"

The two of them had to cooperate with Qin Guan to maintain their balance. Actually, Yin's feet were still on the ground, but Qin Guan was not paying attention to details. All he knew was that the people he wanted to save were both in his arms.

You should lose some weight, Sister Xue!

Qin Guan ran again, shocking their pursuers. His rescue mission looked a lot like a hijacking.

"Wow! Another wonderful picture! Take a snap! What are you doing?"

Soon, the absurd trio reached the parking lot, followed by a group of excited spectators. Some slower girls were caught by the security guards, but some others followed Qin Guan to the parking lot.

Qin Guan slowed down as soon as he reached his destination.

Smiling in relief, he got ready to put the two guys down.

"Qin Guan, don't stop! Run!" Armani roared from the open door of the Rolls Royce.

Qin Guan tightened his arms again with a shiver. Yin was speechless. Dude, I can run myself. Let me go! Please!

Words were pointless. All that mattered was running!

"Faster... faster..."

Bang! Bang!

Qin Guan threw his friends into the car and climbed inside himself.

Crack! The owner of the car closed the door calmly.

The redhead paused before the black Rolls Royce, sobering up enough to put down her small bucket and board.

# Chapter 608: Ancient Benefactors

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The luxury car was more valuable than she was. If she spilled blood on it, it would be considered a crime. On the other side, the law would not punish them for attacking the crowd.

"Go!" the driver ordered, taking advantage of her hesitation.

After a sharp turn, the car left the troublemakers behind it. Those lucky dogs were confronted by the girl on their way to their cars.

She poured blood on the other cars, ignoring the siren of the patrol wagon. She was happy she had not spilled blood on the Rolls Royce. As a native, she had noticed the plate number at the back of the car right away. She sneered at those who were ignorant.

It was lucky that she hadn't done any damage to the car, or she might not have lived to see the sun rise the next day. She shot a look in its direction as the police got her under control. Bon voyage, ancestors!

The escapees adjusted their clothes in the car and then looked at their benefactor.

He was a middle-aged man of unique style. He was actually the same age as Armani's son. The authentic suit looked elegant on his body, and his classic Italian features were impressive.

Qin Guan felt like a pauper trying to express his appreciation.

"Thank you so much for your noble actions. May I have the honor of knowing your name?"

"Morka Salvador."

He shook Qin Guan's hand before changing the topic.

"Good! I've always had an eye for good boys. You are brave and loyal to your friends. I think my family would benefit from meeting you. I will support you!"

Qin Guan shot a confused look at Armani, who looked solemn. The old man gave him a meaningful look and then closed his eyes in an effort to relax. Qin Guan understood that Armani wanted to talk about this later.

The warm rich man changed into a forthright man in a second. He was very easy-going with Sister Xue.

On their way back to the hotel, they exchanged cards and talked about the fashion circle, as well as the beautiful sceneries in Sicily, as if they were old friends. They parted ways reluctantly at the entrance of the hotel.

Armani remained silent as they walked down the hallway. Everyone followed him, sharing that meaningful silence. When they were safe in Qin Guan's room, Armani became himself again.

"I'll call your staff for you." The team had to be extremely anxious after losing its leader.

Sister Xue was making a call as Armani waved at Qin Guan.

"Come here..." The two of them had a private conversation.

"They won't go too far. They just see the commercial value in you."

"Who?"

"Salvador and his Mafia family from Sicily."

Qin Guan coughed. "The owner of the Rolls Royce? He didn't look like a..."

Armani nodded in pride. "The Italian Mafia is not like the vulgar gangs of New York. It's the origin of underground gangs all over the world. They are all very sophisticated gentlemen."

Is this your idea of patriotism? Shall we get to the point?

Qin Guan scratched his head. "What do they want from me?"

"To cooperate with them on a movie. Some of them are trying to

change their money-making methods. Nowadays, the best way to launder money is by producing a blockbuster."

"Don't worry." Armani patted him on the shoulder. "The Salvadors are the only family to set foot in the Italian fashion circle. They are very reasonable. They follow our rules. Actually, if you could get along with them for some time, you might come to like them. How shall I put this... They are silly enough to rely on somebody else."

What do you mean by that?

The revolutionary gang had become a part of Italy. People from different circles maintained a relationship with them. Only a foreigner like Qin Guan could be shocked by that fact.

He tried hard to come to terms with those astonishing news. A knock on the door brought Sister Xue back to reality.

"Oh, here they are! Come in, please..."

A few people entered the room and left with Armani, leaving the three Chinese guys stupefied.

# Chapter 609: Preparing for the Rise of the Asians

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"Take things as they come. I'm actually impressed with myself. I was brave enough to invite Salvador over for tea..."

"It doesn't matter, Sister Xue. He's a middle-aged man from Sicily. His grandson may be old enough to go to school..."

"F\*ck off!"

The joke cheered everyone up.

We'll be returning to New York after the fashion week after all. I'm only an ordinary passing traveller. Besides, Armani told me not to think too much.

The big incident caused by the animal protection organization was spreading online. People were having fun trying to find something interesting in the pictures, especially the ones where everyone was running in a different direction.

"I liked this part of the Fashion Week!" A naked man, protesters... The other fashion weeks were inferior to Milan on this aspect.

"Ha ha! I found Qin Guan in the crowd. He's next to Armani! Wise choice!"

People were talking happily about the news while some guys forwarded the official reports from the Italian media.

"Look at this! It's so funny!" In the pictures, Qin Guan was carrying Armani and his assistants.

The first photo reminded people of the true feeling of being in danger, while the second one was a good depiction of Qin Guan's curious nature.

"Ha ha! I want to know who that strong man is!"

"The woman must be Qin Guan's agent. I've seen her in many

pictures on newspapers."

"Is her stomach all right? Is she still alive?"

There was a sea of delight. A lonely user revealed the truth beneath some posts.

Customer Service: The strong man is Yin Changtao, a Chinese designer. He was invited by the Milan Fashion Week as a promising, talented young man.

Wow! When did Qin Guan's official blog start offering customer service? The fans swarmed the user like bees.

"Hey, boy! Tell us about Qin Guan's schedule!"

"Is his underwear black or white? Tell us, so we know you're not a fraud!"

Customer Service: See you tomorrow...

Rongzhi burst into laughter as he watched the discussion area get messy. This is so amusing!

It was easy to amuse fans online, but it was very difficult to impress the judges and spectators during the Milan Fashion Week.

During the day, eight new designers from different countries would be presented one after the other. They had to rely on their ability to attract the audience and the media, as all of them were strangers to the critics.

They would make their debut on the dazzling stage without being tested in the market first. Would they soar up to the sky or fall down from Heaven? Nobody knew...

The media and insiders of the fashion circle remained silent, which was a smart choice. Only fashion tycoons expressed their interest openly.

As a result, the commercial-value-oriented show of those designers started differently than the shows of other brands.

Those were the circumstances under which Andrew Gn set out for his adventure in Milan.

All the staff on and off the site were busy working. They were experienced employees sent by the organizing committee, which made Yin, who was walking around nervously backstage, relax a little.

As a representative of Chinese designers, he had a special collection to present to the audience. There was an one-way glass between the stage and the backstage area, through which he could observe the reaction of the audience.

Qin Guan had changed into his outfit and was standing next to Yin, talking about the audience members, who had already taken their seats.

"The media are in the C-1 area, so they can stand up and walk around without bothering anyone else."

"Most of them are from international fashion magazines and local newspapers. A few popular fashion websites are also in attendance."

Yin calmed down gradually as Qin Guan explained.

"Clothing companies and brand representatives are in the A-1 and B-1 areas. They've come here with different goals. The former will be your competitors in the future, but you can also learn from them if you want to design mainstream, mass-consumption clothes."

"The latter will be your sustenance. They will decide whether your brand will be accepted by the fashion circle."

Suddenly, Qin Guan saw a familiar figure walk by slowly. What is he doing here? This is like wasting pearls on a pig!

It was Ye Dong. His ex-roommate took his seat in the B-1 area gracefully. Unlike other people in that area, he began naturally socializing with strangers. He greeted, chatted and flattered



others. In five minutes, the people sitting around him began to shake hands with him as if they were old friends.

# Chapter 610: Flourishing China

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Sincere smiles formed on the faces of the cunning businessmen. Somebody went up to Ye and embraced him to show off their close relationship.

"We'll talk about this later. Let's talk about the people in the D-1 area now. They'll be playing a key role in your future. They will decide what is waiting for you. If they consider your designs outstanding, silly rich men will be chasing you. You could put a sack on your models, and they would still love it. If they think your designs are bullsh\*t though, I suggest you create a new brand from scratch. You wouldn't succeed otherwise, even if you made clothes out of gold and silver."

Yin Changtao shivered as he looked down at the strange men sitting in that area. They were all dressed up like peacocks. He wouldn't have been surprised if they had been wearing a set of armor or had a monkey sitting on their heads.

He hadn't expected that they would be the ones who would determine the future of his career. I have to flatter them.

Qin Guan could read his mind.

"Of course, this will only last while you are a newcomer in the circle," he said scornfully. "One day, when you are powerful enough in the fashion market, the situation will be reversed."

"Even if your designs are too weird for the average person, they will consider it an ode to human nature. The fashion circle believes only in a designer's ability. Welcome to the club, Yin Changtao."

He was speaking neither too slow nor too fast. Yin rubbed his head excitedly. "When will I reach that level?"

"Did you see Giorgio Armani?"

Qin Guan burst into laughter as he patted Yin on the shoulder. "You are not nervous, are you? Congratulations. You are in the

best mental state one can be before a press conference."

Yin smiled unconsciously as he looked at Qin Guan's meaningful smile. He is right. There's nothing to be worried about. Worst case scenario, I'll just return to my small store in London.

Butterflies were destined to break out of their cocoon and show their beauty to the world. So was Andrew Gn.

Several traditional musical instruments accompanied the show.

Du Juan and Lv Yan came tripping down, one dressed in white and the other in black. The lights went out one after the other. People suppressed their screams as the colorful oriental jewellery shone on the stage.

As white as Hetian Jade. As green as jadeite. As yellow as amber. As red as agate.

Different colors interweaved to form a mysterious world. The golden and silver threads on the models' outfits looked like a beautiful galaxy.

In China, people preferred low-key luxury. Fashion lay in the details, not on the surface. The audience was absorbed in the dream. Everyone was feeling as if they were in Heaven.

Only when the two girls disappeared did the experienced critics come back to their senses. There were no screams or roars, only the cameras filming the event.

A spontaneous applause erupted gradually like a salute to the high fashion. The audience deemed it worthy of being remembered.

Two black beauties suddenly walked forward. Unlike the Paris Fashion Week, which preferred to use multiracial models, the Milan Fashion Week seldom chose models of other races. The applause stopped suddenly at the sight of the two black pearls.

Everyone was shocked by the variety of the brand.

The models' outfits were different in style than those of the Chinese models. The complicated embroidery, multi-layered materials and gorgeous accessories attracted everyone's attention.

There was an abundance of Chinese silk and embroidery, and the designer had skilfully used a large amount of unsalable leftover jewellery materials.

The outfits' charm lay in the concept of their design. Qin Guan knew that Yin had succeeded.

Oil tycoons in West Asia, rich men in Russia and European nobles were introduced to a rising country.

The next models were European girls wearing elegant, graceful outfits. They were overall very harmonious.

The audience adapted to the different style of the new brand as the exciting show came to an end. The door to the backstage area, which was decorated with willows and other ancient trees, was opened slowly.

# Chapter 611: An Unprecedented Performance

---

A doorknob jingled on the wooden gate as the audience quieted down. The sound was lonely and sad. The lights had changed to a white color that was almost transparent.

Music was played by the traditional string and woodwind instruments as a man walked through the gate.

It was Qin Guan. He was walking towards the audience as if he was strolling in a courtyard, watching the tide or appreciating a beautiful rainbow.

He was wearing red, which was the hardest color to pull off. People usually looked like bridegrooms or countrymen in it. It was very difficult for a model to pull it off on the stage.

The formal outfit was titled "succeeding in a government examination" and it was a re-imagination of a traditional costume in a more dramatic, exaggerated manner. In ancient China, successful candidates of the highest imperial examinations would parade down the streets in such outfits.

The clothes were made of red Yunjin and they were handmade by Yin, so they were unique in the Milan Fashion Week. The long hem was trailing after Qin Guan on the floor, moving up and down in waves, and the silver threads weaved on the inside were flowing along with his steps. Qin Guan's outstanding skills were admired by the audience.

His hands were hidden in the long, loose sleeves with the hollow embroidery. There was an intricate cloud pattern on the white silk, and the belt around Qin Guan's waist complimented his perfect figure.

Before anyone could come back to their senses, Qin Guan had reached the end of the stage. He stood there for three beats and

then suddenly started dancing along to the music.

He opened his arms as wide as he could to show the sleeves to the audience. It was a traditional "birds paying homage to the phoenix" pattern, which was the highest level of Chinese embroidery.

"Wow!" The exquisite embroidery earned everyone's admiration. Suddenly, the drums started beating again.

Qin Guan smiled. His lips were red, and his eyebrows were black. His face looked like a blooming peach blossom.

Everyone was stupefied as he moved. He waved his long sleeves around while he danced, his steps hidden under the long hem of his outfit.

The drumbeats became faster and faster as Qin Guan turned around on his tiptoes, the long sleeves moving around him like a flower. The gold and silver threads on the lining were revealed to the audience.

A harp jumped over the dragon gate, reflecting the title of the outfit. The painting had come to life!

"Wow!"

People began to talk with each other as the show site turned into a bazaar. When the drumbeats came to an end, Qin Guan paused suddenly and flicked his long sleeves out.

Then he turned around and left with steady steps.

It was not easy. Everyone knew that a person got dizzy after spinning around for a long time. One had to train hard in order to walk this leisurely. Models were no ballet dancers though. It was impossible for them to do that.

Qin Guan was gone with the wind. The final notes of the flute faded away as the mysterious figure disappeared through the gate.

A deafening applause broke out.

Ye Dong flushed. He clapped his hands as hard as he could,

showing off to the people around him. "Qin Guan was my classmate. He is Chinese..."

He received a lot of praise. Thumbs were waving before his eyes.

"It's a miracle! Chinese people must be good at magic!"

"It was so beautiful! I'll buy everything!"

As everyone got excited, the gate opened again for the encore. This was Yin Changtao's moment.

Fully-dressed models clustered around the strong man. Qin Guan stood right next to the designer.

# Chapter 612: The Ambitious Textile Industry

---

He was a tender man who loved "A Dream in the Red Mansion". Despite his tough demeanor and strong body, he felt like crying.

"Thank you so much... I'm so excited..." Yin burst into tears on the stage.

"Qin Guan... Thank you so much..."

He was about to rush up to Qin Guan and stain his clothes with his tears and mucus.

"This outfit took 10 people and one month to make! It's made of fine materials and intricate embroidery. Unless you want to destroy it, don't cry in my arms!"

Yin stopped and wiped his tears away on his sleeves.

Save your tears, young man. There is even more applause waiting for you.

The audience let out a sigh of admiration for the designer.

"You are wonderful! I love your designs! You are an outstanding man!"

"Darling, look up! Over here!"

They were getting closer to the stage, while buyers and brand businessmen blocked Sister Xue's way under the stage.

"I would like to be Andrew Gn's agent. Where do I apply for the job? Does he sell his designs to high-end flagship stores or shops in shopping malls?"

"Would you have the ability to deal with the growing sales?"

"I wonder if the materials Andrew Gn uses could be sold to others."

They expressed the desire to collaborate with the new brand, as they found boundless commercial opportunities and other



possibilities in it.

As the meritorious guy behind the curtain, Ye Dong felt overjoyed. He felt like he was walking on a cloud.

Thank God I followed Qin Guan's advice and supplied those materials to the Chinese designer. The outcome was equal to Armani's.

Qin Guan had actually suggested the materials to Giorgio Armani. Ye Dong had gained a big contract.

They didn't let the small fish go after catching the shark either. Even the smaller fish in Milan were international brands. J Clothing was just a baby compared to them.

...

There seemed to be no end to the celebration. After a long time, the staff led the audience out. As all the models were changing clothes backstage, Ye Dong followed Qin Guan.

"Well done, Qin Guan! In one year, your part-time job has taken you to the top of the world. Do you remember showing off to us after that gig at the car exhibition?"

Ye Dong was reminiscing with mixed feelings. Qin Guan was also feeling conflicted in the fitting room.

Ye is right. Back then, I was satisfied with a few hundred yuan. Now I'm familiar with the stage, but I only use it as a tool to make more money.

Ye was still babbling outside the fitting room. "You are the pride of China. You should know that..."

He paused angrily, trying to squeeze the words out of his throat.

"I have been in Europe one month and met with plenty of associations, both official and not. I also visited some transnational family businesses. They are large-scale businesses with strict standards. Every link and detail is concrete in the clothing

industry."

"Profit prevails. Everyone welcomes new producers and suppliers. Everyone is in need of cheaper materials after all. Where does dignity come in though? Is China doomed to be the supplier of the simplest and cheapest materials?"

"Unprocessed silk, cotton, linen and wool are relying on cheap labor."

Ye had gotten lost in his thoughts, but Qin Guan remained silent. All he could do now was listen.

"I'm not resigned to the current situation. That's why I met you in London. I wanted to give this a try. I brought high-end materials all the way from China just for you. I'm not familiar with the industry after all, so the official channels don't help me that much."

"Who would know that my roommate would be one of the top models in the Milan Fashion Week? You did this for me! I had spent so many days negotiating with everyone!"

Ye Dong was excited. He was a smoker, so he took a cigarette case out of his pocket unconsciously. Then he remembered that he was in the backstage area and put it back.

# Chapter 613: Becoming Famous

---

"After our press conference, all those picky buyers will be lining up outside my office. Thank you, Qin Guan..."

Qin Guan changed into his own clothes and opened the door.

"You are talking like a sentimental girl, Ye Dong! Have you finally surrendered to my charm? Ouch! What are you doing?"

Ye hugged him around the shoulders.

"What am I doing? I want to take a picture with you! I should take advantage of this before you take off your robe!"

"Three, two, one... Cheese!"

They stood side by side, looking happily at the camera. The man with the square face was making the victory sign.

They were both smiling heartily, happy about their reunion and their bright future.

They would make great progress after the Fashion Week.

As expected, when the news about the outstanding show spread online and through traditional media, Yin Changtao became the new favorite of the fashion magazines.

Milan Fashion: Yin Changtao is a pioneering newcomer with a high-end design concept. His brand has been welcomed with open arms by the market!

The London Times: It was a perfect show of traditional Chinese art. The oriental Heaven we have been dreaming of since the Middle Ages is finally here. Now we know why silk was considered a luxury product by nobles during past centuries.

French Media: This is the origin of beauty. I think every reporter that attended the show will always remember that fairy. He might be Asian, but he belongs to the whole world. One year ago, Giorgio Armani ignored all objections and pushed this young man to the

front stage. I think many people had been waiting for him to fail, myself included. Some people even speculated that he was the illegitimate child of the old man.

The Asian boy refused to give any interviews. Instead, he kept studying at college. I think we knew even less about him than we did about Cindy Crawford's dog.

The quiet model shocked the world at the Fashion Week though. Oh, no. He did not shock us. He just did his job. Words couldn't express my feelings about Chinese style. I can only surrender to Qin Guan's unprecedented elegance and talent.

Reporters and fashion critics glorified the show, the designer and Qin Guan with their kind words. Du Juan and Lv Yan were outshadowed by Qin Guan's popularity, but they knew his story very well. They were also fans of his.

As professional models, they thought of Qin Guan as their idol and the No.1 model in the Chinese fashion circle. American people were more subtle though.

They used to sneer at the European economic depression and weakness, but they actually admired European art and culture. The reports in the American media the next day were shameless.

The New York Times: America is witnessing the rise of Qin Guan. Nobody can deny that Qin Guan is a Chinese student. Nobody could deny that America is his favorite country. The top five American fashion magazines have contributed to his success, and so have American high-end products. The Chinese young man is also studying at Columbia and has collaborated with Miramax and Paramount Pictures.

Thus, we could say that New York created Qin Guan, and Qin Guan has contributed to New York's popularity.

It was a shameless, but undeniable point of view.

In one day, Columbia had received more than 10 donations, the

fans on Qin Guan's official blog had reached 180,000, and all the products he had advertised were selling like crazy.

Perhaps Britney Spears and Madonna's record company was the happiest though. Their single had reached the third place on the charts.

## Chapter 614: Bursting A Bubble

---

It was actually J Clothing that had benefited the most from the event. Attracted by their large poster, young people entered the store because of their admiration for Qin Guan.

"This must be the outfit he was wearing in Milan!"

"It looks lovely with those mysterious Chinese characters..."

"It's both cheap and fashionable. My mom could fit into the larger size!"

J Clothing, which was famous for its first-rate quality and reasonable prices, began selling to foreigners, regardless of the purchasing group. During the following weekends, their stores in New York experienced a golden era.

Sitting in the warehouse, Guo Nuoyan read through the sales reports excitedly, calculating the company's total capital flow in the future.

Tomorrow I will have a discussion with Liu Tianxia and withdraw part of the capital to open two more stores in Los Angeles.

Qin Guan's career as a model was flourishing. Meanwhile, the news about Milan spread to China, causing some people to discover Ye Dong.

Never underestimate the curiosity of Chinese people. To Qin Guan's loyal fans, anyone close to their idol was worth paying attention to.

Some well-informed people posted material of Qin Guan during the Milan Fashion Week on Haijiao. As they looked at the pictures, they noticed the strong man with the square face.

"They seem friendly with each other."

"He is not a member of Qin Guan's team or a staff member of the

organizing committee."

"He looks like a Chinese official..."

Silence prevailed in the forum, followed by denial.

"Impossible! He is too young to be an official. He must be Qin Guan's classmate abroad or something."

"Yes!"

Everyone jumped to that conclusion subconsciously. It was Ye Dong's demeanor that misled the girls.

Liu Xiaoyang and Li Jie, who were always up to date with their roommates, were shocked by the photos.

When did Ye Dong go abroad and get together with our influential man? Does his director know about this?

Ye's immediate superior, who had been his senior at college, was speechless when he saw the photos. His capable man had been exposed to the public in Milan. It was him who had asked Ye to contact Qin Guan. Outstanding young men living in foreign countries could be used tentatively. Everybody was responsible for helping their motherland after all.

Before he could come back to his senses, the phone rang.

"Hello, this is Yan Cheng... Oh, director. It's you!"

"I saw the photos in Milan, Yan Cheng. That young man has impressed me. He's a very smart guy. I heard that you sent him to Europe one month ago? The guys from the China Textile Industry Association are waiting for our response."

"The enterprises could operate independently, but the government should grant them some conveniences. It is our duty after all."

"Yes, yes!" Yan Cheng sat up right unconsciously.

"I was planning on sending you a report, sir. Ye was laughing

happily in the photo because he had good news. Ten minutes ago, he sent me an email to report his achievements in Europe..."

"Yes, orders. Large orders... According to my estimation, they will take up about 20% of the annual raw material production of high-end clothing in the country."

His director remained calm on the other end of the line, but Yan's tone got higher.

"We'll keep making persistent efforts. You want him to station himself in Europe and start an agency in charge of the clothing industry? He just graduated from college one year ago... What do you think?"

"Yes, you are right. We should bring in fresh blood and integrate with international parties. You are making a lot of sense."

The director was delighted. "Younger people can understand the fashion market well. We have just opened our door to international buyers. If we just work silently without publicizing things, it will be easy to tumble though," he warned his subordinate.

"Ye is a smart guy. He knows how things work abroad. He made the right decision in asking help from Qin Guan. He knows the high-end market really well. We could create a shortcut for Chinese producers this way."

Yan Cheng nodded again and again at the man's words.

Twenty minutes later, he hung up.

"You are getting promoted fast, bastard..." he murmured as he looked at the photo on his screen.

If Ye could organize the agency abroad, he would be in charge of all the work there. It didn't matter if he returned home or stayed abroad. Either way, Ye would have a smooth future ahead of him.



# Chapter 615: Returning Home Momentarily

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Nowadays, young people are very efficient... Yan Cheng read through the thick pile of orders that had been sent through fax. And lucky...

Actually, Ye had borrowed some luck from Qin Guan.

Meanwhile, Qin Guan was panting as he ran after his girlfriend in the direction of the classroom. He was wearing a hoodie and a hat instead of formal attire.

He would be taking the seasonal examinations that day. As a punctual girl, Cong Nianwei had only been delayed by her boyfriend.

When Qin Guan had returned to New York, he had realized he had become the mascot of the community. Warm neighbors gave him flowers and home-made pies, so he had to return home again and again.

Paris Hilton had also contributed to that. Before leaving, she had pulled a prank on him. She had sent posters and T-shirts with his picture to all the families in the community as an apology for the inconvenience she had caused them.

They had all had to bear with reporters and fans hiding in their property and moving trucks creating a traffic jam.

She wanted to apologize for the inconvenience to her temporary neighbors. Only when she left did everyone find out that a celebrity had been living in that student apartment.

Qin Guan was the vampire from the Armani advertisement, the playboy from "Sex and the City" and Chuck Barris, but he was also their neighbor.

As soon as he returned to New York, people started greeting him everywhere.

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei rushed to their separate classrooms. The seasonal examination was about to start.

Qin Guan rushed into the classroom panting. He saw the cold face of the invigilator in front of him. As soon as the man saw Qin Guan clearly, he forced a smile.

He had recognized him. The guy was the God of Wealth at Columbia. He was bringing in donations not just for the Finance Department, but for other departments as well.

People had formed a group to comfort Prof. Martin and take pleasure in his sorrow.

In Prof. Martin's opinion, Qin Guan was the laziest student at Columbia. If Qin Guan's grades declined, he would lead a miserable life in the future.

Qin Guan took his seat. He had prepared well for the exam, as it would decide whether he would go on holiday in October.

Columbia insisted on traditional answering sheets, so the students were familiar with the smell of ink.

The sheet was full of questions. To a student without full attendance, that mark would play an important role in their final grade.

"Cheers!" Qin Guan shouted to himself in his mind before he began his test.

Basic theory, practical application, and comprehensive analysis... Everything was easy to answer. In one hour, he had finished a sheet that would take the others two hours to complete. His classmates had become inured to this peculiarity, as the same scene was repeated every time during their exams.

Qin Guan handed in his sheets and left. He didn't forget to pay a visit to Prof. Martin's office. He set a keychain with the symbol of a Milan soccer team on his desk.

Fake fans couldn't distinguish between International Milan and A.C. Milan, but he collected team memorabilia of national soccer teams.

The old man was easy to flatter.

Qin Guan had to suck up to him so he would return to China in October. He was doing it partly for Director Zhang Yimou and partly for the appeal.

No one would dare turn down a promotional film for the Olympics. Qin Guan would be able to go home with Cong Nianwei. It was time for Liu Xiaoyang to help him clean up his apartment in Beijing.

His plan went well. Even without the bonus of full attendance, he still ranked as the No.1 student of the department. The college administration approved his vacation for the donors' sakes.

After a long journey, he had finally returned to China. He and Cong Nianwei were walking clumsily in the terminal building with their luggage. There was a crowd waiting for them ahead.

This was all Li Jie's fault. He had been boasting to junior girls at a public gathering.

# Chapter 616: Information Disclosure

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"Do you know Qin Guan?"

An innocent girl was looking at him with admiration in her bright black eyes.

"That's my brother! He is returning to China. Do you know who will pick him up from the airport? Liu Xiaoyang and I! We are his best friends!"

...

Li Jie was doomed to die for a woman. He would do anything if a woman asked in a flirtish manner.

As a result, the news spread all over campus overnight.

Huang Jiajia, who was a senior student now, was busy preparing for the postgraduate entrance exams and her thesis, as well as cherishing the passing happiness of student life.

She was a powerful sister at the college, so her girlfriends told her about the news. Words couldn't express her mixed feelings.

She sat in the empty grand hall for a long while before she finally dialled a familiar number. Mou Xiaoliu's voice came from the other end of the line.

They had not contacted each other ever since Mou had graduated. As time went by, their precious memories faded away.

"Hello! It's me, Huang Jiajia."

"Jiajia? What happened? Why are you calling me?"

"What do you mean? Am I not allowed to call you?"

She was as bad-tempered as usual.

"No, I was just surprised. I'm very excited. I've... missed you."

After a long silence, came an unnatural response. "I missed you too..."

"I just wanted to tell you that Qin Guan is coming back."

"What? Why? Was he expelled?"

Her voice had gotten higher. Huang had to move the receiver away from her ear.

"Why are you so upset? According to Li Jie, he is coming back for work."

"You scared me!"

"If you are free, we could go see him at the airport."

"Okay, Jiajia. It was great to hear from you!"

"Oh, rubbish! I'll send you a text later."

"Okay. I'll pick you up from campus!"

"See you later!"

Huang hung up with a smile.

When Li Jie woke up, he found a team waiting under his dormitory.

"Li Jie, Li Jie! Get up! Where is Liu Xiaoyang?" the energetic girls shouted at him.

It was terrible for a man to be awakened early in the morning. Li Jie opened his window angrily.

"What are you doing? I'm sleeping!" When he saw the crowd below, he paused.

What happened? Did the American Army invade China?

He shook his head in an effort to wake up. Then he saw dozens of fellow students, both familiar and unfamiliar, looking at him as if he was a god.

"What happened?" he asked again, lowering his voice.

"Let's go to the airport to get Qin Guan!" the girls shouted together, led by Huang Jiajia.

Their flag was blowing in the wind. "Qin Guan, we love you!"

Li Jie was really annoyed. He was hangover, but he had to maintain his dignity before the girls.

Bang! He slapped his own face. "F\*ck! What shall I do now?"

Before he could figure out a plan, Huang Jiajia shouted at him in a decisive voice, "Don't try to fool me! Don't blame this on Liu Xiaoyang. We are not some crazy fans. You won't lose face before your roommate!"

"Qin Guan is probably used to getting flowers and being applauded by fans. As his old friend, you can't meet him empty-handed. Look! We are the perfect team! You will be our leader!"

The girls were cheered up by Huang Jiajia. She is right. We are not some shameless fangirls. We support our idol considerately!

Li Jie scratched his messy hair. Then he craned his neck outside the window.

"Okay! Let's go together!"

"Yeah!"

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei saw them waiting behind the railing.

# Chapter 617: Stars at the Airport

---

Qin Guan spotted Liu Xiaoyang and Li Jie among the crowd. The two of them looked speechless from guilt.

"Cong Nianwei?"

"Yes?"

The couple slowed down.

"Are they waiting for us?"

"They must be."

"Shall we just walk past them and pretend we don't know them?"

"I was thinking the same."

The noisy crowd had attracted the attention of the security guards, who had gathered around them. Some people were whispering to each other.

"What happened? Is some big shot flying in?"

"Are you kidding? They would never arrive at a civil aviation terminal. And those kids couldn't have heard about it. It must be some kind of celebrity. They leak the news themselves to create rumors."

"The security guards have just noticed them. If it was some famous star, their PR team would have informed them in advance. They usually behave themselves."

"Maybe the news were leaked in secret. Maybe we'll get to see a superstar!"

An old Peking man sniffled. "A superstar? There are only a few international flights at this exit. Those kids like only Korean hoodlums."

He sounded reasonable.

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei were lingering around the exit,

hesitant to meet those guys. We'd rather get some rest here.

They set all their luggage down and took a seat. Suddenly, people began to pour through the other exits.

They saw four young men of different heights and physiques that seemed good at dressing up. Long black hair, blue eyes, clean short hair... The handsome boys looked avant-garde among the Chinese travellers.

Qin Guan recognized them at first sight. It's the [F4](#)...

A group of about five people followed them with their luggage. It seemed like they would be attending many publicity events in the Chinese Mainland. They were still popular in China, so they must have come to make some quick money.

"They seem like celebrities. We have been abroad for more than a year though, so I'm unfamiliar with them," Cong Nianwei told Qin Guan.

"They used to star in a campus drama," Qin Guan explained patiently. "They are superstars in Southeast Asia. I'll download their TV show if I can."

They watched the group move towards the exit, when Qin Guan suddenly spotted another acquaintance. Actually, it was an acquaintance from his past life. Qin Guan knew him, but he didn't recognize Qin Guan.

A man in the center of a group of South Koreans was showing off his identity to the others.

In 2003, plastic surgery in South Korea hadn't reached its peak yet. There were few handsome men in the entertainment circle, most of whom succeeded thanks to their temperament and stylish outfits.

The TV show they starred in featured love triangles, illness and death. It was long and very boring.



Housewives, who were tired of serious TV shows, loved it though. More and more Chinese people fell in love with the actors, so the Koreans had recognized the potential for business opportunities.

Pei Yongjun had come to China to meet his fans on a secret invitation. The organizer did not want to cause them trouble. All he wanted was a chance to show off. Spending time at an irrelevant place like the airport was unnecessary.

After being hidden for so long though, the Koreans felt inclined to reveal their presence. They hadn't kept a low profile during their trip. In order to avoid fans, one had to dress in everyday clothes and follow the stream of people, but they did the exact opposite.

They were all wearing uniform black suits. Pei, who had a white windcoat and a grey scarf on, was in the center of the group. His poor female assistants were pushing two trolleys of luggage behind him. Women were very underprivileged in South Korea.

The Chinese people around them couldn't bear to watch. The old Peking man spoke again.

"Our female comrades should have retired after the war to fight the U.S. aggression and aid Korea."

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei burst into laughter.

"Our boys will be annoyed by their popularity. Look at those mainland guys waiting here! How did they know?"

"I don't know. They are behaving themselves after all. They stood in line without making a fuss."

"If the fans are alright, you could go greet them. I could take some pictures," said the agent of the F4, who was a woman of her word.

The four boys nodded. Their future would be decided by her agency. Such an order would not affect the whole picture though.

They all walked over, putting on their famous smiles, which were very popular in Southeast Asia. Many Thailand princesses had been addicted to them.

"Hi! How are you?"

They went through the corridor, their staff leading and protecting them.

A group of four men, Yang Chengxu, Zhu Xiaotian, Zhou Yumin and Wu Jianhao, famous for “Meteor Garden” in 2001 in Taiwan.

# Chapter 618: Awkward

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The security guards were unaware of the details, so all they could do was stick to their posts and protect the bystanders.

The group from the Capital University of Finance and Economics remained silent. They just narrowed their eyes and raised their eyebrows at the men.

Who are they?

The F4 and their agent didn't say anything.

"Let's be quick. It must be an official fan club organized by the government to welcome sports stars back to the country. Listen to me, these are all fake fans. They just do their job with no feeling... Why else would they be this orderly?"

The agent comforted the four boys, who nodded again and again. Suddenly, one of them looked back.

"Elder Sister, there must be another star behind us!"

Zhu Xiaotian, who was the most honest one among them, saw Pei Yongjun's team not far from them.

They immediately slowed down and shot angry looks at the culprit.

"This is disgusting. South Koreans always act like they are royalty! Ha!"

Pei's group was cheered up by the crowd. They held their heads high with an arrogant, silly expression on their faces.

"Get out of my way!"

What are you doing? You are walking in a row in a broad hallway!

"Stop taking photos! Our Pei wants to have an ordinary life!"

Excuse me, but I don't see anybody taking pictures of you!

Everyone was afraid, so they unconsciously pushed some girls close to the railing.

Their actions were really provoking.

"Hey, bastard! Why did you push them?" a bad-tempered young man exploded when he saw the girls getting bullied. Those guys were tentatively bullying the weak.

The students took out their weapons, which included a wooden board and some flag poles.

"Who do you think you are, you son of a b\*tch? How dare you challenge us here in Beijing! You have been spoiled by your silly fans, but we are not your f\*cking fans! Piss off!"

"Put down that trolley, Mou Xiaoliu! You've gone too far!"

Pei had never met such a group of people. He had originally planned on stopping his men when the fans started crying in disappointment. Then he would go over and give them an autograph or take a picture with them. That would set a good example for other South Korean stars.

What the hell was happening though? There was a big number of weapons flying at them. Mom! This is terrible! I have to protect my face! I just got a nosejob a few days ago!

His team realized that they had kicked a hornet's nest. Those bandits were not fans, they were enemies. The manager was the first one to be attacked. Covering his head, he pushed forward against them.

"Go! Go! Go! It's too dangerous!"

"Ha ha ha!"

The four boys were laughing loudly. Their agent didn't stop them. Instead, she started cursing joyfully.

"You deserved that! You f\*cking Koreans seized so many fans from us!"

The Koreans escaped down the hallway and saw the security guards standing silently behind those devils, as if nothing had happened.

They felt insulted. The short manager reacted fast in an effort to save Pei's dignity.

"You bastards! We'll complain to your director! This is nonfeasance! We are foreigners. We should be under extra protection!"

If you knew you were foreigners, why would you behave so atrociously in someone else's domain? Unscrupulous laughter came from the students. They had to stay there for Qin Guan. Otherwise, they would have chased them and greeted them with the warmth of Chinese people.

It felt good to see that someone was more miserable than they were. As the F4 were taking pleasure in the Koreans' misfortune, the students started shouting.

"Welcome home, Qin Guan!"

"We love you, Qin Guan!"

"What? Who is Qin Guan?" The name sounded familiar. The two parties looked around the hallway again.

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei moved slowly with forced smiles. The students raised their flags and started shouting slogans, welcoming them home.

# Chapter 619: Diamond Cuts Diamond

---

The well-mannered students suddenly got passionate.

"I'm a senior at the Finance Department. Class of 2001!"

"I'm a senior at the Accounting Department. Class of 2000!"

Qin Guan marched on. Every person he looked at would shout out their identity like a soldier.

Qin Guan realized it was impossible and unnecessary to hide his face from his fellow students, so he took off his white cap and smoothed down his hair.

Loud cries broke out.

"You are so handsome!"

"You are really a superstar!"

Mou, who was standing at the end of the line, was so excited that she left a handprint on the iron pole. It was more than a year since they had seen each other last. The boy walked over slowly with the same smile he was wearing in her dreams. He was her first love.

Huang Jiajia scolded her.

"Calm down, please! He is not a panda in a zoo!"

"You cried just as much when he left..."

Suddenly, Mou noticed that Qin Guan had reached the end of the line.

"He is coming!" The iron pole made a cracking noise.

"Where? Where is he?"

Huang Jiajia turned into the passionate young girl she had been at the age of 16. She turned around and saw the boy she used to be in love with.

He was a short distance away, and yet they seemed miles apart.

Her eyes met his.

How are you getting along?

I'm okay.

They nodded at each other without saying a word. The familiar expression in their eyes made them feel as if they'd gone back in time.

Crack! Mou had broken the chain behind the railing.

"I'm sorry! Let's go, Qin Guan! I'll help you with your luggage!"

The students clustered around Qin Guan and left the terminal orderly.

The hall was quiet once again. If it was not for the broken chain, nobody would have known what had just happened.

"Shall we stop them?" a young security guard asked his superior. "They destroyed public property after all."

His superior set the railing back as if nothing had happened.

"It's no big deal, young man. Chains require maintenance. They tend to break after long use."

"Only an idiot would try to stop that girl..." he murmured to himself.

The group of students went out in a formidable array. The other celebrities finally saw the face of the person who had embarrassed them.

"It's Qin Guan!"

Agents had to pay close attention to all the rising stars in the entainment circle.

"He is the man who was hindering your career in China. We are lucky that he moved to America, or your fame would have been inferior to his."

The female agent let out a long breath as she watched Qin Guan

and his team walk over. He had a perfect figure, and his jeans and hoodie complimented his long legs and slender waist.

The splendid smile on his face looked dazzling in the sunshine. The agent felt the impulse to cover her eyes.

Qin Guan, who was standing in the middle of the two groups, looked around, revealing his white teeth.

"Hi!"

The F4 were smart boys. Following the rules in Taiwan, they bowed before Qin Guan politely. Their agent didn't want their imposing demeanor to take a hit, but she knew that the four boys were not equal rivals of a man with two Best Actor Awards.

She had to obey the rules.

The Koreans were not as tame though. They tended to bully the weak and fear the strong. Judging from Qin Guan's Armani and Rolls Royce advertisements, they believed that Qin Guan had powerful connections.

He had also won two out of the three European awards, so Pei's commercial value and professional status were inferior to Qin Guan's.

After thinking for a few seconds, Pei's agent stretched both his hands out.

"Hello, I'm Piao Changqu from the BF agency in South Korea. It's an honor to meet you. I'm looking forward to cooperating with you in the future..."

He tried to create an opportunity out of their accidental meeting.

Actually, the modeling industry had been going the wrong way since the very beginning. Fake faces couldn't prevail for long.

Qin Guan retracted his hands politely when the bus pulled up to the curb. The large bus with the university logo departed fast.



# Chapter 620: The Chinese Stamp

---

The old Peking man, who had witnessed the whole incident, put his cell phone back in his pocket. He had taken plenty of pictures in secret.

Turning around, he hummed a Peking Opera song happily.

"I'll rush over and kill them all..."

Did he think he was a hero who had fought against Japanese invaders?

The bus was filled with joy. As a rich man, Qin Guan had promised everyone a big meal after he was done with work. That was his way of expressing his gratitude.

He couldn't choose a small restaurant, so in the end he picked Jun Wang Fu...

When the group dispersed, Qin Guan regretted showing off.

"Wei, shall we hold our wedding banquet here? We could pay for it with the cash we'll get as a wedding gift."

Cong Nianwei was unpacking her luggage without looking at him. "Our parents will arrive tomorrow. The house is too small."

"You are right. When my job here is over, we'll buy a larger one together. We are local royalty after all. Tomorrow, we'll separate and take care of our affairs."

"I'm hungry..."

They had both missed the food of their motherland. Chinese restaurants in America were not right for Chinese people.

Qin Guan rushed to the Hu Guo Si snack bar, shouting happily.

It was the most famous snack bar chain in Beijing. It sold dozens of Beijing snacks while preserving tradition. The taste of the food had remained the same throughout the years.

It was great to be back home.

Sesame paste, cooked sheep or swine tripe, handmade noodles... The young couple gorged themselves on the delicacies, making the other customers smile knowingly.

Love and happiness were in the air.

Refreshed by the delicious food, Qin Guan was in high spirits when he met Sister Xue at the "Chinese Impression" media conference. When they reached the site of the ceremony, they noticed that the place looked very solemn.

There were no media or fashion insiders. The people there were very strange.

They looked like they did not engage in movies, but in conferences.

When he was led to the area reserved for actors, Qin Guan found the few actors there sitting in a corner.

Interesting! Actors had to play a leading role at such an event.

Qin Guan began to talk to the others.

"Hello! May I have the honor of knowing your name?" I have no idea who that old man is. Is he an old actor?

"Nice to meet you, I'm a jade sculptor."

"I'm a dancer of the Central National Dance Troupe."

There was no actor there except Qin Guan.

Only when the media conference began did Qin Guan spot Director Zhang Yimou. The man looked helpless.

The long table on the stage made the event seem like an important national conference. The director of the film was sitting at the end of the table.

A kind old man knocked on the microphone, indicating that the conference was about to begin.

The officers from the Olympic Sports Center delivered a 10-minute speech about the significance of sports spirit.

The Ministry of Culture attached great importance to the film.

The National Tourism Administration wanted to promote a cultural tourism image at an international scale.

The Palace Museum would just carry out the tasks assigned to it by its superior leaders.

The Administration Office of Beihai Park would make sure that the site would be clear during the shooting.

The Temple of Heaven Park would cooperate with the crew without influencing the flow of tourists.

The neighborhood committee of Legation Street...

Hey! This is just a short film...

Qin Guan was getting sleepy in his chair. Suddenly, a deafening applause broke out. After an hour and a half, the conference had finally come to an end.

Satisfied with the progress, the directors left with their hands at their backs as their secretaries and assistants carried thick piles of paperwork.

The actors exchanged confused looks.

"What are you doing, Qin Guan? You are an experienced actor. You will have a lot of responsibilities in the future."

"What?"

"What do you mean 'what'? Follow me!"

"Okay..." You are the boss.

Several shabby minibuses pulled up next to them, some greenhands spontaneously clustering around Qin Guan. Everyone got on the buses.

The short documentary, which would be titled "Chinese Stamp:

Dancing in Beijing", would serve as a connecting link between the previous and the next Olympics. It would have to impress not just the Chinese people, but an international audience.

Naturally, Zhang Yimou had the financial and human resources support of the government.

For example, the administration office of the park would take care of crowd control around the shooting site and the staff would ask the tourists to steer clear of the location.

The shooting site was actually a wharf made of bamboos, with a mist lingering above it and a stream flowing around it.

# Chapter 621: An Exquisite Young Man

---

Everyone had to hurry up to finish the short film without disturbing the others. Naturally, Qin Guan was assigned a task as soon as he arrived.

The assistant director, who was in charge of the figurants and the main actors, walked over to Qin Guan with a smile.

"How are you doing, Qin Guan? Are you tired after your long journey? Your scene is next. Could you give the others a lesson in your spare time?"

He dared not shout at a Best Actor Award winner, like Director Zhang did. Although the young man had shot no famous films in China, he was a two-time Best Actor Award winner. Very seldom did a Chinese actor win such an award abroad, so all the winners were worshipped in the domestic film circle.

Even though he hadn't been tested in China, Qin Guan was still a gift from god in the eyes of the investors.

The assistant director was kind and careful as he talked to him.

Qin Guan, who was an easy-going man, agreed right away. All the people around him were big shots in their own industries.

It's a pity that I did not bring Cong Nianwei. The director of the Sculpting Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts is also here.

The Chinese stamp at the beginning of the film was his work.

Qin Guan's team got to work. Sister Xue gathered the dancers to teach them some basic shooting skills, while Qin Guan was responsible for the main actors during the scene.

"Grandpa Qian, you don't need to walk in during the scene. Just look up while you're carving the jade, so the cameraman can film the side of your face. Don't pay attention to the camera under the

glass. It will be recording automatically."

"The dancers' job is a lot easier. Lin Juanjuan, do you see that white circle on the ground? That's your position. You can do anything you like within it."

The three dancers were looking at him with sparkling eyes. They were all leading figures within their own industry, but Qin Guan would be their teacher while they shot the film.

Zhang Yimou smiled until wrinkles formed on his face. I didn't think Qin Guan would like teaching others.

"Are you ready? We can watch the other actors perform now. Don't be nervous. Your parts are short. Plus, they showcase your abilities. Just follow my instructions."

Everyone nodded in unison. Zhang Yimou suddenly remembered something and pointed to Qin Guan.

"You go first. Show them what you can do!"

"Okay!"

Qin Guan walked out boldly.

He was wearing a loose linen outfit. His cyan pants were hanging down over his black cloth shoes as he walked to the site leisurely. He sneezed three times on his way there.

His thin clothes and the shooting location were to blame.

The bamboo house was located next to a lake, and white mist was lingering around the area. The place was not inhabitable by any means.

Cold air rose up from the silver waves as an autumn breeze blew above the lake and over to the bamboo house. Qin Guan was sitting in the center of the hall, facing the green mountains and the blue lake. The thin bamboo-paved road led to the wharf on the bank.

Qin Guan had no idea how ancient people had been able to behave so elegantly in such an environment, but he knew why

those talented people had died at a young age. They must have frozen to death.

Nobody showed any mercy on him. Everyone was completely absorbed in the beautiful scenery.

"Three, two, camera!"

Qin Guan began performing.

He sat cross-legged on the ground before a traditional Chinese table with a pile of bamboo slips on it.

Both his back and neck were straight. He seemed to be talking with ancient people across a one-thousand-year timeline.

His clothes were blowing in the wind as he held an elegant brush in his hand.

The brush, which was soaked in dense ink, was dancing on the bamboo slips, leaving characters behind it. The script was of a regular but old style that only used characters.

The camera shifted from his back and the elegant handwriting to his face. What an exquisite young man!

There was an ancient poem that started with the phrase "A jade-like person walking on the field..." That phrase could describe the scene aptly.

Grandpa Qian, who had been a representative of painters, calligraphers and sculptors in the 1930s, was completely lost in the scene.

# Chapter 622: The Sculpting Master

---

Both the landscape and the man in it were worth painting.

Director Zhang paid no attention to the riot. He just kept pushing the camera forward to capture the perfect scene. It was a wonderful combination of emotion and reality.

Qin Guan's handsome looks, calm expression and smooth handwriting made him look very graceful. Suddenly, the handsome man started murmuring to himself.

The scene must be coming to an end. I'm so tired of raising my wrist to write. How long has it been now? Ten minutes? Fifteen? There is no spare space left on the bamboo slips. Shall I keep writing?

When Qin Guan's hands began to shake, Director Zhang stopped the camera.

"Well done, Qin Guan! Stay here. I have some good news for you."

Qin Guan agreed before he ran back to Sister Xue, who gave him a windcoat to put on.

Don't get sick, my boy. You have so much work during the next few days.

What a considerate agent!

Shocked by Qin Guan's acting skills, the other actors started clapping. In their opinion, he was the hope of modern Chinese cinema. Although they were not insiders of the film circle, they had reached the consensus that the Chinese film industry would flourish if all actors were as capable as Qin Guan.

Grandpa Qian was walked to the set by Zhang Yimou. He would be carving a jade imperial seal that reflected the theme of the documentary.

Grandpa Qian was a master in his field. He got all his materials



and tools ready and then got to work. Director Zhang sat behind the camera silently. So did Qin Guan.

He envied the man's skill.

Qin Guan memorized his carving method, the way he used his tools and the final composition with his eyes and brain. Professional skills were always important.

In a few minutes, Grandpa Qian had created a figure that was running with open arms. The figure was running and dancing as a way to welcome victory. It looked like the traditional Chinese character "京".

It was an artistic crystallization. The old man blew the debris away gently to reveal the final pattern. The stamp was visible clearly on the camera.

Qian pressed it into a red inkpad and then stamped it on a piece of white paper to form the logo of the 2008 Olympics. That simple but meaningful stamp was the protagonist of the documentary.

Qin Guan was aware that they had finished the most essential part of the film. After the break, they would head to another location. The staff packed up all the equipment and props. Most people left, as their job had been finished.

Another group of people arrived and headed to the temporary office with Qin Guan. He and Sister Xue didn't come back to their senses until they sat in the office, which used to be a park lounge.

They were not surprised to see Lu Chuan there, but the other two men seemed to be from the Huayi Brothers Media Group.

Besides, why was Feng Xiaogang there?

Sister Xue and Qin Guan, who were both cautious by nature, remained quiet. They looked down, waiting for those strange guys to speak first.

Lu Chuan was the one to break the silence.

"We just scared him, Qin Guan. Don't worry, it's no big deal."

Then he winked and made a shameless gesture of prayer.

"Please shoot a film with me, Qin Guan! Please!"

Both Qin Guan and Sister Xue let out a breath of relief, but Qin Guan was still looking at the men doubtfully.

"A film about what?"

"Ke Ke Ci Li."

"Ha ha... Shall we go to Qinghai?"

"Sure!"

"The location is okay. Is there anything you are hiding from me?"

"The film is about wild animal protection. It will be a record of actual events, so it may influence your career as a model."

That explains the strange atmosphere. They are treating me as a top model first.

It means "capital".

# Chapter 623: Cunning Filmmakers

---

After reading the script outline, Qin Guan understood why they were worried.

Because of the demand for Tibetan antelope fur in the Euromerican market, antelopes were killed recklessly by poachers, which had made their number fall sharply from 1,000,000 to no more than 10,000.

That was a sin committed by the international fashion circle.

Qin Guan put down the script and smiled. "As long as there's an appropriate schedule and a reasonable salary, I'll do it. I want to shoot a film with a sixth-generation director."

"Really? Wouldn't that influence your status in the fashion circle?"

"Never." Qin Guan raised an eyebrow. "If you knew what I said at the Milan Fashion Week, you wouldn't be worried about that."

Relieved, Lu Chuan pushed the script towards Qin Guan. "Take it. The crew is ready. We can start filming anytime you like."

Qin Guan nodded as Sister Xue put the script away. They turned to the Wang brothers together. Before they could say anything though, Feng Xiaogang cut the ground from under their feet.

"I know why they are here. If you accept my offer, I'll tell you."

Feng, who was famous for his big mouth, betrayed them right away.

"You must not be aware that they..." Feng paused and pouted at the brothers, "They have contacted Columbia Pictures to jointly produce a film with them so the investment risk is smaller. Actually, they just want to cheat the foreigners and release the film overseas."

Qin Guan and Sister Xue nodded in unison. They were familiar

with that method. Even a film with great potential could bomb at the box office. They preferred to share the risk.

"What's the deal with me?"

"They want you for your influence, of course. The investors were hesitant about the indie film, but they changed their minds when they heard that you would be the lead. They have taken 50% of the investment already. They will be in charge of the overseas release."

"The two brothers promised them that you were planning on shooting some films in Huayi. They were happy about the news, so they decided to support you. They are looking to further increase your appeal."

"You are a money-making machine. As for me, as an experienced director with good taste, I have to explore new ways to shoot my new film. We have never cooperated before, so I wanted to talk with you as early as I could."

"If we succeed, my film will do great at the box office. If we don't, at least I will be able to say that I collaborated with an international Best Actor Award winner."

Commercial filmmakers were as cunning as foxes.

Sister Xue and Qin Guan exchanged a meaningful glance.

They had a pile of scripts to look at. A small role with a good salary would be the ideal option. The brothers felt at ease, but Zhang Wei Ning and Zhang Yimou frowned. Qin Guan had accepted Lu Chuan's offer, so he would reject the film "House of Flying Daggers".

As leaders of the indie and commercial cinema, both Feng and Lu viewed Zhang's new film unfavorably.

Due to its plain plot and wrong positioning, the film's only highlight was Zhang Ziyi, who was an actress with great commercial value. Their evaluation was actually very objective.

When the negotiation was over, Qin Guan returned to the urban area. A group of people were waiting for him at the Jun Wang Fu Restaurant.

Cong Nianwei was waiting for him there. Everyone who had welcomed them at the airport had been invited. The manager was happy about the party, as it would take him less time and staff to prepare it.

By the time Qin Guan got out of his car, the pavilion in the garden was already ablaze with lights. This had been done for the safety of the customers, as the restaurant was half a kilometer away from the street.

"Sister Xue, are you coming with me?"

"No, thanks. I'd rather not join the youth."

She left without hesitation, leaving Qin Guan idling before the entrance with his large backpack.

The cold dishes had already been served. The young students were happy and noisy as the cook got to work. The host had to be an insider of the catering industry, for they had ordered the finest dishes with the most vibrant colors, amazing smells and exquisite flavors.

Every cook enjoyed serving an experienced foodie.

# Chapter 624: Taking Clients Out To Dinner

---

Surrounded by his students, the cook began his lesson.

"Master, who is he? This is a bigger feast than the Spring Festival or any other kind of festival!"

"Yes, it is. The guests are all college students. It must be a student's party," the cook replied calmly.

"It's not graduation season. Besides, I heard that the host came alone. What a black sheep! If I had done that, my mom would have beaten me to death!"

The cook didn't care about the mysterious host.

"There are many capable people hidden in the capital. Our restaurant is famous for its palace cuisine, but our dishes are worth their price. The average price is 500 yuan per person. It's nothing. That guy must love gastronomy. He is not foolish enough to order only expensive dishes. If he did, he would have to spend more than 1,000 yuan per person."

His students believed him. Even a portion of egg fried rice cost 50 yuan.

"Master, the other patrons over there seem like rich people. The four of them alone will pay just as much as those eight students."

"Hey! Are you done yet?" His master lifted the pan high. "Can we get back to cooking? You have a lot of spare time, don't you?"

Master and apprentice relationships in the catering industry were very strict. The students scattered in all directions and got to work.

The private room was filled with joy. Huang Jiajia and Mou Xiaoliu were sitting at the table closest to the door, so any passers-by were able to spot them right away.

Unfortunately, this didn't bring them any luck.

"Mou! What a coincidence! What are you doing here?"

An unwelcome guest walked up to Mou. It was a middle-aged man with a receding hairline.

"Who is he?" Huang Jiajia asked Mou impolitely.

Mou looked calm. "Hello, director Liu."

The guy seemed happy with the greeting. He was the director of the Credit Center, so he was very respected among young girls.

As soon as Mou had been assigned to his office, he had asked around about her. She was just a graduate from a famous college without any eminent social connections.

The director strode into the hall confidently.

"Are you having dinner with your friends?"

He shot a cantankerous look at Huang Jiajia. Young girls are lovely these days.

"These seats are for ordinary guests. I'm treating some friends to dinner in the private room over there. Shall we have dinner together? You could make some new friends. They are major clients of the Credit Center..."

Director Liu gestured at them. Those clients would be important for his credit that year.

Mou was a good-tempered girl, so she did not get angry. She just pointed inside and said, "One of my schoolmates is having a party."

Liu looked inside and saw that the dishes were not very expensive. Students are poor. Maybe they are having dinner here by splitting the check.

Sure about his guess, he waved at Mou. "Young girls should save money for their future. It's my treat. Follow me to the private room."

He tried to take her hand, but Mou was a martial artist and

Huang Jiajia was a very smart girl. Together, they poured a pot of hot tea on him.

"Ouch!"

The two girls covered their mouths in surprise.

"Are you okay?"

"You scared us! If you wanted to have some tea, you could have said so!"

That was victim-blaming at its best.

Fortunately, it was autumn, so the clothes he was wearing were not very thin. Director Liu hadn't gotten burned. There was only a water stain on his crotch, yet he still felt humiliated.

"You did this on purpose! You cannot appreciate a polite gesture! Come with me! It's your job to accompany clients to dinner!"

The people inside heard his shouts. Liu Xiaoyang and Li Jie, who had been greeting guests on Qin Guan's behalf, saw their roommate's admirers.



# Chapter 625: Accidents Happen

---

They wouldn't let two girls get hurt in their domain, much less if they were Qin Guan's fans. Liu Xiaoyang looked at Cong Nianwei and got her approval.

Liu always ran wild. He didn't care about any rules or laws. He just wanted to punish the guy, even though the two girls had not really gotten hurt. He walked over to them, rolling up his sleeves on the way.

Meanwhile, Qin Guan was walking over from the other end of the corridor.

"I'm so hungry..." He suddenly paused. "What are you doing here? Are you lining up to welcome me?"

He thought he was being funny, but everyone else felt awkward. He didn't realize there was anything wrong until he reached the threshold.

"What's going on?" He unconsciously turned to Huang Jiajia and Mou. "Are you causing trouble again?"

"Qin Guan!" Huang Jiajia stood up. "That fat man asked Mou to be a barmaid!"

Director Liu screamed upon hearing the fake accusation. "That's nonsense! I just asked her to meet some major clients in the private room. She is my subordinate. Is there a problem? I also offered to cover the expenses for your party! Be reasonable! Why did you pour tea on me? My clothes are very expensive, you know!"

Qin Guan realized what was going on. Freshmen are not easy in the workplace nowadays.

He pointed inside and asked Director Liu, "Your treat? Are you sure?"

"Sure! Which table are you sitting at?"

The students stood up one after the other. "Brother Qin!"

"Senior Qin!"

"One, two, three... All of them. Your treat!"

Liu realized that he would have to pay for all the tables in the hall.

Qin Guan waved at the waiter. "This kind man will be paying the bill. Let him know about the total amount."

"Okay! It's 4,000 yuan per table."

"You are so nice, Director Liu! Thanks a lot!"

Liu looked as if he was about to blow up in someone's face.

"Fine, Mou Xiaoliu. I'm just being kind. You are a slacker at work though..."

Before he could finish his words, another voice was heard saying, "Lao Liu! You invited us here and then disappeared! Are you planning on escaping without paying the bill?"

His clients were walking along the long corridor.

"Wow! Is that Qin Guan? You bastard! When did you come back to Beijing? Why didn't you call us?"

The major clients were some acquaintances of his, including Zhang Zhenqian and Bu Qinglu...

"You've been a stranger ever since you won those awards! You still have a share in our company, you know. I would be careful if I were you!"

Qin Guan was speechless. They were all successful people after all. Their income reports were increasing every year, yet they were still wearing casual clothes.

Qin Guan opened his arms, happy to see them again after such a long separation.

"I arrived yesterday. I was just having a party for my old

schoolmates. You are rich men now. Why are you still wearing those clothes?"

They were wearing loose hoodies, pants and slippers.

"Let's have dinner together and catch up!"

They didn't care about being called spongers.

"No problem. Let's eat together! I like to eat with big company!" Bu Qinglu spoke for the group before he turned to Director Liu, who looked stupefied.

"Lao Liu, this is our brother, Qin Guan. He's a Best Actor Award winner! He just returned from America. Let's talk about our affairs later!"

"Besides, you have to go home and change pants."

How considerate!

"But... But the loan..." Liu stammered.

"Oh, there's no rush. See you!"

But I'm in a rush...

Liu watched them enter the hall and hug each other around the shoulders. He realized his effort had been in vain.

Sighing, he cast an angry look at Mou, who was following Qin Guan with her eyes, and ground his teeth.

Such an employee won't go far. What a toy boy!

# Chapter 626: Setting Out For Qinghai

---

Qin Guan took a seat among his old friends and schoolmates.

The table culture of Chinese people was full of human kindness. During dinner, people expanded their connections and made new friends.

After exchanging a few words, Qin Guan caught up with his old friends. They had prospered during the past couple of years. Their small company had succeeded not just in the development of the western regions, but also in entertaining the residents of the capital.

They had established a chain KTV called Haoledi. Qin Guan's value had been rising in the process, but his total assets had reached a debt of tens of millions of yuan.

This was because his previous investment had not succeeded yet and his next projects had to be expanded. In other words, everything was in place except for the capital. However, many banks were begging to give them a loan to benefit from their success.

Qin Guan took a sip of tea and shouted in the direction of the door, "Mou Xiaoliu! Come here!"

Mou ran over right away with a reluctant Huang Jiajia.

"What for?" Her sparkling eyes had remained the same.

"Are you in the Credit Department? Is that guy your direct supervisor? I will help you avoid a retaliation. I have a share in that company, so I call the shots."

The other guys did not object. They were used to hearing Qin Guan's opinion on financial problems. They all nodded in unison.

Qin Guan smiled at the girl. "Your director failed, but you succeeded in getting the loan. Tomorrow, these three guys will go

to the bank for you."

Mou smiled like silly. "That's great!"

Qin Guan turned to Huang Jiajia. "What does that supercilious look on your face mean? Why aren't you greeting your former tutor?"

The girl burst into tears.

Qin Guan looked at Cong Nianwei nervously. "I wasn't bullying her!"

"I thought you would never be kind to me!" Huang Jiajia cried out.

A warm hand caressed her head, making her cry even louder. Mou felt jealous as the hand caressed her head with the same long-lost warmth and tolerance.

I have to cheer up. Senior Qin is offering his support to me.

The guests dispersed as the moonlight was reflected in the hall like water.

Qin Guan had some sips of wine, which was something he didn't do often. He didn't have to work the next day though, so he could afford to drink.

The next day, Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei parted ways. One of them headed for Kekexili, while the other would be in charge of their parents' arrival on the weekend. Both were very difficult jobs.

The two film crews started filming at the same time, which caused a lot of trouble for Qin Guan.

Both "Ke Ke Xi Li" and "A World Without Thieves" were being produced by Huayi and included scenes that had to be filmed on the plateau. That was the main shooting site, so the train had to be driven down from a height of 4,700 meters above sea level. This would save everyone time, money and work.

Feng had shamelessly stolen Qin Guan from Lu Chuan after all.

The jeeps were climbing up the plateau one after the other. They had to carry up all the supplies, including the props, the costumes, some food and medicine.

This was no fun and games. It was actually a battle with cruel nature.

Qin Guan would play a minor role in the film, but he still had to learn about the shooting methods of Chinese directors.

Wang Baoqiang saw Qin Guan as a member of his family. He kept following Qin Guan around, his arm locked around his.

"When did you come home, Brother?" Qin Guan was having some lunch during a rest stop.

"Do you know that I was selected by Director Feng himself? Do you think this film will make me famous?" Qin Guan was sleeping at a small hotel.

"There are so many stars in this film, Brother! Liu Dehua, Ge You... I'm afraid of them. Yesterday, Liu Ruoying smiled at me..." Qin Guan was in the bathroom.

Why aren't you afraid of me? I'm a two-time Best Actor Award winner!

One had to forgive the simple boy. In his opinion, only people who appeared frequently on television could be considered stars.

# Chapter 627: A World Without Thieves

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Finally, the film was about to start.

Qin Guan let out a long sigh of relief. He was determined to do his best to finish his guest role early. He only had five minutes of screentime in the film after all.

Fan Wei was the leading character in the scene, who would be making funny jokes. Qin Guan would just help him amuse the audience.

He would be portraying one of the three robbers. It was only a scene shot with a single lens, but most of the actors were gathered there to shoot some highlights as a way to test the shooting and editing skills of the director.

This was nothing for Feng. When all the main actors were present, the funny scene began.

They were on a train heading from the plateau to the urban area. The staff of the Qinghai Railway Administration had helped them arrange the set in a few spare carriages on the tracks. All the figurants were natives. The leading actors were all in position, waiting for the director's orders.

Qin Guan was standing in front of the carriage with Fan Wei. You Yong was right behind them.

"Xiao Qin!" Fan's unique accent amused Qin Guan, but he tried his best to suppress his laughter.

"That's it! I was afraid that you would laugh during my performance. Greenhands always laugh at me!"

It seemed like he was always made fun of.

"Don't worry, Fan. I promise I won't say a word..."

Before he could finish his words, the assistant told them to get started.

Old Ge You was standing across from Qin Guan. He had a big round head, but he was just as tall as Qin Guan. He was looking emotionally at Qin Guan, who was wearing a cat mask. The two of them exchanged a meaningful glance.

Out of the blue, You Yong's gun was pushed against Ge's head.

"Robbery!"

Qin Guan looked down at Ge and whispered a secret to him while waving his forefinger.

Everyone in the carriage panicked. "Hush! Silence!" Qin Guan warned them gently.

Fan couldn't stand it anymore. "Ru.. Run!" he shouted at the crowd.

Ge You sighed as Fan forced the words out of his mouth. Then the old man said calmly, "Robbers like you annoy me. You don't even have any basic skills..." He was telling the truth.

His calm interpretation was extremely funny. Comedians who didn't use exaggerated facial expressions and body language were much more talented than guys like Jim Carrey.

They were more capable and could have more successful careers, as it was easier for them to form their own style.

Qin Guan observed everyone's acting skills carefully. They were all experienced actors in the Chinese film industry, so there was a lot for him to learn from them.

The shooting went on. Both Fan Wei and Qin Guan took off their masks to reveal their faces. Qin Guan melded carefully with the background, serving like a perfect contrast to Fan's funny performance.

Director Feng nodded behind the camera. What a good actor! He knows how to cooperate with others. He is not like those rising stars who are always eager to show off.



The honest actor was about to be tested though.

The main camera retreated, leaving Qin Guan to be the center of the scene. His orchid-like fingers made him look like a sissy as he waved his arms before his chest, threatening all the passengers. "Be serious! We are robbing you!"

As expected, everyone burst into laughter. The weapons in the robbers' hands didn't frighten them at all.

"Stop laughing! We are robbing you!" He had an authentic capital accent that lacked any scary elements.

"Ha ha!"

Feng was the first to burst into laughter. The whole crew was looking at him blankly. "Great! Cut!" he shouted in an effort to hide his guilt.

But we were just half-way through the scene...

"Five-minute break so everyone can laugh!"

What a considerate man!

# Chapter 628: The Kekexili National Nature Reserve

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Qin Guan continued performing without a pause, gesturing at everyone angrily. "Stop laughing! Pay attention! We are shooting a film here!"

"Ha ha..."

Feng Wei patted him on the shoulder with a smile. "You are a comedian in the making."

Thank you so much!

Soon, the second half of the scene began.

Fan felt the back of a policewoman's waist brush against him. He looked stupefied.

Policewoman: Do you feel that?

Fan: Yes.

Policewoman: What is it?

Fan fell silent before he turned to Qin Guan for help.

Qin Guan got impatient with him. He poked Fan's head with his slender finger, exasperated with Fan's failure to look good. He looked like a woman grumbling in a flirtish manner.

Feng was taking long breaths, trying to hold his laughter back. It's the altitude. I'm suffering from hypoxia!

"What do you feel? Tell me!"

When Fan uttered the word "gun", the policewoman took it out. Qin Guan was hiding in a small corner with his hands tied behind his head. He seemed to be very familiar with the procedure. He must have been arrested plenty of times in the past.

He was portraying the cowardly robber well.

The main actors were watching his performance from the background. Liu Dehua and Liu Ruoying were very interested in the two-time Best Actor Award winner.

Wang Baoqiang was looking at Qin Guan with sparkling eyes. Qin Guan's advantages were his own shortcomings.

He was the best choice for some roles, but he would never be suitable for some others. A handsome guy could portray a charming prince, but he could never be convincing as a hillbilly.

"Good! Cut!"

Feng grinned, his bare teeth betraying his good mood.

Filmmakers believed that if the first scene of a film was finished smoothly, the whole film would be a success.

Liu was a greenhand at acting, so his acting skills were not very elaborate. However, Liu Dehua, who was a very experienced actor, was interested in Qin Guan's performance.

He knew that good, experienced actors tended to have a routine in their performances. For example, Chen Daoming portrayed all emperors in the same way, and Sun Honglei had to try to shake off all the gangster characters he had played.

Liu acknowledged this problem. No matter what character he portrayed, the audience always saw him as Liu Dehua.

This was a terrible thing for an actor, yet he was enlightened by Qin Guan's performance, which combined fine oriental emotions with exaggerated occidental expressions. His acting skills only served the character, not the actor himself.

The award-winning actor was certainly worthy of his reputation.

Liu would not be surprised if the young man returned to China and caused a storm.

The whole crew watched Qin Guan go. Everyone could tell that he was special. That short scene had been enough for them to

know.

Lu Chuan smiled at Qin Guan when he saw him.

"We'll set out for Kekexili tomorrow!"

The Kekexili National Nature Reserve was a pearl of the Yushu Tibetan autonomous prefecture in the Qinghai Province. It was the largest and highest-altitude natural reserve in China and it had the richest wildlife in the country.

One could find there beautiful Tibetan antelopes, wild yaks, Tibetan wild donkeys, as well as rare plants and the Gobi desert, all things they could not see in the city.

The sky there was so blue, it was nearly transparent. Its distance from the bustling world made the location a pure land where humans and nature lived in harmony.

The residents there were living in the past. They were like hermits on those snowy mountains, grassland, desert and Lama temples.

Tibetan Buddhism was dominant in the area. The devotees were not that many, but they were very faithful. Sutras were being chanted everywhere.

The blessed location would host a crew of more than 100 people.

Humans and animals had very different lifestyles though.

On their first day there, some weak crew members were affected by the altitude, which made everyone very nervous. Fortunately, the three leading actors were in good health. They left the patients at the hospital and started for the plateau. They wanted to finish their jobs as soon as possible.

# Chapter 629: Simple Tibetan Girls

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The first and last scene had nothing to do with Qin Guan. They were just meant to show the indifference and cruelty of that depopulated area. Lu Chuan wanted to film a real traditional celestial burial, which was something that was about to become extinct in Tibet.

A celestial burial was the traditional funeral of Tibetan and Mongolian people. They believed in the reincarnation and immortality of the spirit, so in their minds, death was only the spirit's departure from a dying body.

They fed the vultures with human bodies as an offer of worship.

The cameras were set up fast. It was very difficult for the cameramen to work on the plateau. Even the strongest men were panting heavily as they carried the cameras.

Qin Guan was no better. He admired the people living on the plateau. They were all thin but capable, with an honest expression in their eyes.

Before he could pull any funny faces for some curious Tibetan children, Lu Chan began filming the celestial burial.

The vultures were lingering in the sky in an imposing manner while the monks around the corpse were murmuring words Qin Guan didn't recognize. The big birds descended suddenly to cover the body.

Qin Guan had never experienced anything like this before. The hungry guy all of a sudden lost his appetite.

"See you later. I don't feel well..."

The scene was too realistic to watch. Cruelty and indifference were common elements in Japanese movies. Lu Chuan looked like a gentle guy, but he was berserk inside.

Qin Guan shivered. Suddenly, he saw actress Zhao Xueying stare at a big mosquito on her arm.

"What are you doing? Just kill it!"

"Tibetan people say that everything has a spirit. We should cherish all spirits. I can't harm it."

Qin Guan was speechless. The girl was both smart and beautiful.

He returned to the camp in low spirits. Soon, he recovered and had a local snack.

Milk tea was made of yak milk. It was best to have it at the place where it was produced.

When he finished it, some flushed girls presented him with a gift.

"Is that for me?"

A brave girl nodded before she escaped as fast as she could. Some Tibetan young men shot a few supercilious looks at him. They had never seen such an attractive man before.

The gift was a plain straw-weaved tray with some milk skin on it. The skin looked yellowish. That was precious food for Tibetan people. Four kilos of fresh milk could be refined to one kilo of milk skin. It was a specialty reserved only for distinguished guests.

Qin Guan looked around before he returned to his room. He put the sweet milk skin into his bag. It would be a good refreshment to have during the break.

Qin Guan chuckled to himself, when he suddenly heard Sister Xue shout outside, "Qin Guan! Lu Chuan is looking for you! I have to accept his offer! I'm out of breath! I need some rest... Qin Guan!"

Liar! You are just afraid of hardship. No one needs you in this unpopulated area.

The film reflected the severe consequences of poaching. Tibetan people protected animals instinctively, but anyone could come across any possible danger in the wilderness. Maybe they would

even encounter some real poachers.

"Stop crying, Sister Xue! Lu Chuan would never bring a burden along. We have to go into battle with a light backpack. There's no reason for you to worry!"

"I'm not a burden!"

When Qin Guan came out of the camp, they set out on their trip.

The team included five jeeps and several trunks full of supplies. There were no trees on the Gobi Desert, only the horizon and some winding mountain roads.

There were still pits, slops and quicksand waiting ahead. That area was very dangerous for travellers.

When they got there, they started filming the first scene.

"The characters are smuggling Tibetan antelope wool in this scene... Get ready to shoot!"

# Chapter 630: Half-Naked

---

The autumn sky was clear and the air was crisp in the capital, but a piercing wind was blowing in Qinghai.

Qin Guan had wrapped himself in a military coat. According to native tradition, that was the only way to resist the wind. Qin Guan was standing in front of the camera.

A shabby truck was approaching from afar. It was a shuttle bus used by the villagers on the plateau.

This was the first time Qin Guan was experiencing a battle of wits and courage between the voluntary guards and the smugglers.

Who knew that half a kilo of wool would cost 1,000 dollars and be sealed in a torn cotton jacket?

The driver's clothes had been taken off. Qin Guan rubbed his face distraughtly. "What shall we do with those?"

"Let him go..."

"Why?"

"There are dozens of people smuggling goods for the poachers. Bus drivers, travelling doctors... We can't catch them all!"

Qin Guan sighed under the sky, unable to fathom the dirty deals humans made.

The first scene came to an end.

"We could go to Chumar River by Lake Zhuonair," their guide told him.

Taking advantage of this, Qin Guan talked with the real heroes on their way there. They were all guards of the Tibetan antelopes. They would spend a large amount of their paychecks on equipment for their base.

"Is there someone stationed there?"



"Of course. We are short on personnel, so it's just one guy. The poachers dare not approach though."

"How often do you relieve the guard?"

"Never. He's been there for three years."

Silence prevailed in the car. The old jeep was making cracking noises as it drove through the Gobi Desert. The sky seemed much clearer than before.

They hurried on their way, driving day and night. The dull scenery made everyone sleepy. When they reached their destination though, Qin Guan suddenly came back to his senses.

Chumar River was a fresh river winding through the unpopulated area. It was also an important location for the battle between the guards and the poachers.

Their guide made a campfire, while the crew was busy with their props and equipment. In that unpopulated area, fire was absolutely necessary. Qin Guan put on his cap and got his camera ready. He was the only pretty boy among a group of tough men.

The next scene was a simple yet hard chase. All they had to do was run across the shallow river and catch the poacher on the opposite bank, but they had to be half-naked while they waded into the cold water.

Lu Chuan sighed before he shouted at Qin Guan and the Tibetan people, "Run!"

At his order, the sturdy Tibetan warriors rushed to the bank without hesitation. Qin Guan followed them closely, unwilling to look weak before them.

"Take off your pants and cross the river!"

Everyone took off their pants and ran to the river. Bare legs and underwear were the only things visible on the camera.

"Ouch!"

Qin Guan felt terrible. The temperature was really low, and the chilling water felt as if it was biting his legs. His whole body was shaking. He panted as he moved his legs with all his might. The bank was only a few meters away, yet it seemed unreachable.

They reached the opposite bank panting. Then they got some sad news.

"Once again! Some people were not visible on the camera!"

They had to repeat the scene 30 times!

When Lu Chuan finally nodded in approval, Qin Guan collapsed on the ground. His bare legs felt numb, but the sunlight was unprecedentedly warm.

After that battle, Qin Guan was accepted by the Tibetan men.

"You are really good, young man!"

"Of course! I'm no coward!"

"Really? Stand up and dance!"

They all got to their feet and began dancing around the outsider, wild voices escaping their throats. Qin Guan lay on the ground, watching their long legs and underwear moving around above his head.

He shouted along with the Tibetan men, their voices echoing around the desert.

It felt wonderful to make some unexpected friends.

In the following days, almost half the crew got sick because of the tough living conditions. They suffered from pneumonia, emphysema, fever and hypoxia. Their passion disappeared, making some of them abandon the whole endeavor.

# Chapter 631: The Sin of Desire

---

They escaped with their supplies and luggage, not even caring about getting paid. The hardships of living in that area could not be expressed with words. It was not surprising that they had decided to leave.

After a few days, rhagades formed on Qin Guan's lips. His face felt rough, but he didn't give up. The Tibetan men realized that he was braver than they had expected.

He could swallow up raw rabbit flesh and roll down a sand slope. Thanks to him, the shooting had been shortened and the final scene came to an end.

The wind was blowing sand all over as Qin Guan knelt down on the ground and fixed his eyes on Ritai's corpse. There were no tears in his eyes, but everyone could feel his sorrow.

"Cut!"

Lu Chuan hoarsely asked all 60 members of the crew to pack up their luggage. Everyone was really happy to be returning home. Qin Guan had become good friends with the natives though. "Are there any poachers nowadays?" he asked them on their way back.

"It's hard to say. They avoid the checkpoints, but they linger around the area."

"We have police stations protecting us here..."

An awkward smile froze on his face when he realized that this was true.

"Nothing will happen to us. We are only shooting a film here. Shall we go greet them?"

Bang!

"Don't worry, it was just an accidental discharge!"

The shot helped them escape from the doomed desert. A group of

poachers not far away heard the shot and stayed away. They always avoided large armed groups, so they left the scene of the crime with their harvest as fast as they could. On their way back, the crew came across some dead antelopes.

Fresh blood was streaming out of their bodies, and their black eyes were wide in fear. The scene they had shot earlier had suddenly come true.

The guards walked over and counted the dead animals with broken hearts. One, two, three... They were four hundred and five, including the cubs. That was the exact amount killed in their film. Reality was ugly and depressing.

Everyone fixed their eyes on Lu Chuan.

"Let us know if you need anything, director."

"Cheer up! We'll finish the film as soon as possible."

That was a desire shared by everyone.

They reported the crime to the authorities right away. The young policemen started tracing the criminals with a bitter hatred.

Qin Guan walked over to Lu Chuan. The two of them looked at each other for a long while, communicating their sincere thoughts that way.

"It's a good film. It should be shown to the world."

"You are a good actor. You've been born for the cinema."

The two men embraced each other and the plain Tibetan men.

"You are welcome back anytime, Qin Guan."

"You are our good friend. If you want to have a celestial burial, we'll find a temple for you."

Thanks in advance...

Farewell, Kekexili!

When she left Qinghai, Sister Xue felt immediately refreshed.

She and Yin Changtao had decided to travel around Beijing, as Yin had never been to China before.

Qin Guan returned home to find his surprised parents there.

"Were you really shooting a film? You look like you've returned from a coal pit!"

His mother caressed his face with a sigh while his father patted his shoulder with a worried expression in his eyes.

Cong Nianwei's father seemed to be taking pleasure in his misfortune.

"Ha ha! He looks so ugly, Weiwei! Did he really go to Qinghai? He looks like he's returned from the South Pole!"

"Hush!"

He kept laughing at Qin Guan until Cong Nianwei stopped him. Qin Guan struggled out of his mother's arms and exchanged a look with his girlfriend.

"Dad, mom... Let's talk about this tomorrow..."

Their parents returned to their hotel, leaving the apartment to the young lovers. They would start looking for a house the next day.

All the cabs in the capital had been changed to Jettas and Santanas.

Their first stop were the advanced apartments downtown. According to Qin Guan's memory, they would have the biggest potential. Most of them were in-stock houses with fine decoration. They were outstanding compared to ordinary residential buildings. After two years, the property developers had still kept some good houses in hand.

Those would be Qin Guan's first choice.

# Chapter 632: A Matrimonial House

---

The couple had a specific aim, but their parents had no idea about their income. They knew nothing about their scholarships in America or their careers.

Qin Guan's parents had made a big fortune thanks to Qin Guan. They had a large amount of money in their bank account, so they had decided to spend some gold on getting their son a matrimonial house. The residents of Y city believed that a new house was necessary for a couple to get married.

Qin Guan, Cong Nianwei and their parents arrived at Financial Street, where the famous Huarong Department was located. It was only a few hundred meters away from the subway station and across the street from the international Beijing No. 4 High School, which was a popular school district with convenient transportation. An inch of land in that area was worth an ounce of gold.

It was the best place to invest in if one wanted to rent their house out or live in it. Because of the high prices, the building sales center was functioning perennially, even though the first residents had been living there for more than six months.

All the real estate agents would keep some good houses at hand. They were actually looking ahead, as the prices had increased from 15,800 to 21,100 per square meter.

The high prices obstructed sales, but they made money from the total difference.

"Welcome!" Four salesmen bowed deeply before them as if they were Japanese.

When they looked up, Qin Guan couldn't stand the flattering expression in their eyes.

"Let me serve them!"

"You said you were busy today, Dong. Go ahead and do your job!"

"I need these clients! I have to buy milk powder for my son, Elder Sister!"

"I know you are single!"

They all left their integrity and morality at home.

All families wanted to buy a matrimonial house. In most cases, parents used all their hard-earned money to buy a house for their only child. That house would serve as a happy nest for the young couple in the future.

According to the manager's speculation, the young couple had to have decent jobs. Usually it was the parents who paid for the down payment and the children who paid for the loan.

"Follow me, please!"

The middle-aged woman led them through the gate with an elegant posture. They used the elevator to get to their destination.

"It's a standard house with three bedrooms and a living room facing south and north. There is also an independent kitchen and a bathroom with two toilets..."

The manager opened the doors for them one by one. Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei fell in love with the house.

It had wooden floors, an elegant kitchen design, a reasonable amount of furniture and a large balcony that could hold two deck chairs. The surrounding facilities were perfect too. After the house had been ventilated and cleaned, there would be no pungent smell lingering inside.

If he had been buying the house as an investment, Qin Guan would have just signed the contract without looking carefully at it, but their parents considered it important, as they would be living there after they got married.

The manager waited for them quietly as they looked around the

house, only speaking when they wanted to ask a question. Her sales strategy impressed their parents.

"I noticed that there are four houses on the same floor. There is one elevator for every two houses, right?" Qin Guan's mother asked curiously, squeezing her handbag.

"Yes."

"They are the same houses with a flipped structure, right?"

"Exactly."

"Could we have a look at the other house as well?"

The manager, who was a cunning woman, deduced that Qin Guan's mother was the decision-maker of the family. She was happy to grant her request.

"Of course," she answered softly. "If you have time, we could pay a visit to the other side."

"Okay..." Everyone followed her out.

The two doors were close to each other, so they strode over to the other house easily.

"Manager, this is a new client. I just showed them the house. Are you finished?" Another salesman was leading some clients out.

"Hi! What a coincidence! How are you, Director Liu?"

The man following the salesman was Director Liu, whom Qin Guan had met at the Jun Wang Fu Restaurant. A plump woman was behind them, talking in a dramatic voice.



## Chapter 633: Lao Liu

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"Listen to me, Lao Liu. This house is pretty good. Just listen to me! Your bank is right across the street. I could bring you dinner at night. Take-away is crap. I don't care if it's made by the cook at your cafeteria."

The plump woman with the flowery scarf noticed Qin Guan and heard him greet her husband.

"You know Lao Liu? That boy is so handsome! Did you just graduate from college?"

The passionate woman saw Cong Nianwei, who was holding hands with Qin Guan, and smiled meaningfully. "A young couple looking for a matrimonial house! You should take a good look around!"

Director Liu was scared of Qin Guan. Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei looked at the man with a knowing smile. It seems like this woman is his wife. Before Qin Guan could have a word with the woman, Liu grabbed his arm.

The short man possessed the power of a bear.

"He is a client of mine... Come on, let's take a look around together!"

He pulled Qin Guan through the emergency exit and into the stairway.

Crack! The door was closed as the light was turned on.

Liu and Qin Guan gazed at each other. Suddenly, Liu strengthened his chest. "Is your name Qin Guan? Please spare me! Don't tell my wife about Mou. She would start asking questions. Just tell her that you are my client or my subordinate... Supervisor would also be okay..."

Qin Guan looked at the man calmly with both hands in his

pockets.

A great man always knew when to surrender and when to resist. Liu ground his teeth as he kept begging Qin Guan.

"People always take advantage of their subordinates, young man. Besides, I didn't make any mistakes."

Liu looked up and saw Qin Guan's apathetic expression.

"I'm so poor!" Liu buried his face in his hands. "I'm a middle-aged man with parents, in-laws and kids to take care of... I worked hard for many years in order to become a director. My decadent thoughts disappeared as soon as they formed..."

He started crying as dramatically as a woman.

"That's enough!" Qin Guan broke in helplessly. "No one wants to rat you out to your wife!"

"Then why are you looking at me so strictly?"

"That was my reaction to your terrible acting skills."

Liu took out a handkerchief and wiped his forehead. "Of course. How could I compare to an award-winning actor?"

"You know who I am?"

"I saw you in a cosmetics advertisement. I didn't know you were so successful abroad."

Are you trying to flatter me?

Liu had revealed his true colors. Qin Guan couldn't help but let out a long sigh.

"Director Liu?"

"What?"

"Your handkerchief is clean. Does your wife wash it for you?"

"Yes. How do you know that?"

"Tough men like us don't carry around handkerchiefs. It must

have been prepared by a woman. Besides, your wife must get along quite well."

"How do you know that?" Director Liu looked confused.

"People use tissues these days. Very few people insist on the old habit, even though it saves money and protects the environment."

Liu stuffed his handkerchief into his pocket silently. Then he looked up.

"Although you are a nice young man, I have to point out that you are quite talented at sneering at people. What do you mean by 'tough men like us'? Look at your face. You are trying to bully me!"

Qin Guan smiled at him. "Ha ha!"

They opened the door only to find out that their families had exchanged houses.

"Do you like it? If there is something you find unsatisfactory, don't worry. Our company will inform you as soon as we develop some new real estate."

Qin Guan's mother shook her head. "No, just bring the contract." She had decided to buy it.

The manager was very happy to hear that.

"Full payment or mortgage?"

"Full payment!"

The manager paused for a second. Then she headed to the cashier. I misjudged them.

The POS beeped, making the favorite sound of salesmen everywhere as the receipt rolled out slowly from the machine. It was very convenient to get paid right away.

# Chapter 634: Distracted

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Meanwhile, in the reception room, Liu's wife was trying to change her husband's mind. The number on the contract had surprised her.

"Lao Liu, this is beyond our budget. Even the smallest house in this area would cost us more than a million! You are working at a bank. We could borrow some money from it, or maybe take a look at some other property..."

Lao Liu signed his name on the contract without looking up.

"I make money for my wife and kids. This house is close to the school and my bank. I will save money on transportation and food. Besides, it's also close to your parents..."

"But..."

Liu was a man of his word. As he followed the salesman to go on with the purchase, his wife finally stopped complaining. She knew her husband was a considerate man deep down.

There were so many paths on a person's life that one could lose their way. One day though, something or somebody would remind them of what really mattered.

A moment like that was worth cherishing.

The manager saw the two families off respectfully. When she turned around, she met the sparkling eyes of several girls.

"Tell us, Elder Sister!"

"Tell you what?"

"About Qin Guan! That was Qin Guan!"

They all twittered happily, leaving the manager speechless.

"Xiao Zhang, get me a glass of water."

"No problem!" Xiao Zhang rushed to the water dispenser as fast as

she could.

"I'm getting old. My back is always sore after work."

"I'll massage it for you!" another girl offered.

"That's enough! We've had many powerful people buy a house from us before!"

"But they were old people working on Financial Street! Qin Guan is much more handsome!"

"Tell us, please!"

The manager was satisfied with the effect.

"What do you want to know?" Suddenly, they all began quacking like ducks.

"Was that girl his girlfriend? Are they going to get married? I saw their parents with them!"

"You are right..."

They all sighed in disappointment.

"They're going to get married? But he is so young!"

"I know!"

The manager shot them a supercilious look.

"He is only 22 according to his ID, but there's no need to be anxious. I think they are a perfect match. Besides, even if he didn't marry her, it would be impossible for him to marry any of you."

"That hurt!"

The manager took a sip of water before she stood up.

"Okay, break is over. Qin Guan is not that famous anyway. He is just a handsome advertisement model. Is he famous for his work? No! Has he won a national prize or something? No!"

She had made a big mistake.

"He has won two Best Actor Awards in Europe!" the girls shouted.

The manager was straightforward. "But he's won nothing in China. Now stop talking and go sell some more houses!"

The girls scattered like frightened birds. The manager let out a long sigh of disappointment.

"Young girls are always like this. Celebrities are useless!"

In late September 2003, SARS was put under control in China, people lost an important star of the Chinese film industry, and a new singer rose to fame in Taiwan and became popular all over Asia.

In 2003, both the Chinese film and music industry eventually emerged from underwater. In the fall of 2003, Qin Guan had to see the two people he loved the most off again.

His parents left some new cotton padded quilts and local snacks for them. No matter where Qin Guan was, he could always feel their love.

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei received a call and hurried out, leaving two large suitcases in their room. The call was from the real estate agent who rented the compounds on the Second East Ring.

The alley Qin Guan had bought was about to be evaluated for the first time. The couple rushed to the agency to meet the young employee.

# Chapter 635: The Human Kindness Of A Hutong

---

The young employee had been through many hardships and worked very hard in order to become branch manager.

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei visited the real estate agency. That was the necessary procedure for the owner to get their property back, as they had to check if there had been any damages or changes first.

As they walked down the twisting hutong, the manager began his introduction.

"You entrusted all the houses to us, so we remoulded them according to the temporal conditions to keep the rent on an acceptable level. We make money from the difference, but we have to cover the maintenance costs first. Does that sound right, brother?"

It did. He had warned Qin Guan about that beforehand. When they arrived at the first and largest house, Qin Guan was shocked by the flexible structure.

It was a small house with one bedroom and one living room. The old room had been decorated by the agency. It used to be a staff dormitory with clothing lines hanging in a criss-cross pattern in the yard, clothes and sheets exposed to the sunshine on them.

They entered the room and saw some crowded shelves inside. They could hardly set a foot in.

It was working hours, so the lodgers were not in. They worked at a small restaurant.

"How many people live here?"

The manager forced a smile before showing Qin Guan one of his hands. Then he turned his hand over.

"Five?"

"Ten. I just turned my hand over!"

You are a master of the sign language.

The other houses were in the same condition. Some were even rented by the bed. There was great fluidity among the tenants, so some houses were divided into small cabinets that were rented out to different individuals.

When Qin Guan came out of the last house, he was greeted by an old woman.

"Hello, young man. You are finally back!"

Qin Guan was confused. The woman was wearing a red armband and holding a stool in her hand.

"You forgot me? I met you when you bought the house!"

"That's it!" Qin Guan was enlightened.

"You returned just in time! Take a seat!"

She handed the small stool to Cong Nianwei and returned to her house. She came back in a short while with a small notebook.

"Let me show you... Health care, hydropower, basic street reformations... This is the expense breakdown of the past three years."

Qin Guan smiled at the detailed record and the receipts she showed him.

"Thank you so much, madam. The agency has attached them to my contract."

The old woman gazed at the manager. "Be careful with those weasels. They would do anything for money. Look at your property. They have transformed it completely. If you were in urgent need of capital, you wouldn't be able to sell it at a decent price! Besides, they may charge you extra by using fake receipts!"



The old woman stood in the warm hutong like a hen protecting her chicks. Nowadays, the word "neighbor" was not common in a bustling city, but hutongs were famous for the close relationships between the neighbors. People there thought that a good neighbor was better than a distant brother.

The old men playing chess or cards at the entrance of a hutong acted like guards, and women gathered at the threshold of the plain grocery store, eating sunflower seeds as they chatted. They also exchanged daily supplies there.

At dinnertime, children ran between the tables of different families and shared their food with each other. They grew up together, their sincere friendship an eternal bond between them.

Hutongs were a silent witness of the exciting comings and goings of people. Some moved in, some left, but the stories remained there.

Qin Guan smiled brightly at the old woman.

"You are more experienced than young people like us. I'll be careful with them. It's hard for everyone to make money these days."

"Exactly, young man. What's your family name?"

"Qin. Just call me Xiao Qin."

"Okay. Xiao Qin, do you know that the houses here are going to be demolished?"

"Yes, that's what I came here for."

The woman was glad to hear that the young man was one of them.

# Chapter 636: The Dirty Tricks Of The Real Estate Industry

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"You are really young and you have been living abroad for a few years. You must have no idea about the state of the market. Grandpa Yang has a large yard. All the neighbors are meeting there. Shall we go there, Xiao Qin?"

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei exchanged a look. Cong Nianwei seemed intrigued, so Qin Guan nodded at the old woman.

The manager looked anxious about their decision.

"Brother Qin, your trip back can't have been easy. You shouldn't waste your time on such trifles."

Qin Guan noticed the worried expression in his eyes.

"I'm in no hurry. National Day is just around the corner. I have a two-week vacation before me. Old people possess knowledge and experience that we don't. I would like to hear their suggestions."

The old woman was really happy to hear that.

"You are an honest boy. Follow me!"

"Okay!"

Qin Guan looked at the manager, indicating that they could leave the contracts for later. Then he followed the old woman away.

After several turns, they arrived at Grandpa Yang's yard. The narrow hutong suddenly became wider in that area.

In the center of the large square yard was an ancient locust tree, and chrysanthemums were blooming in the flower beds.

The people in the yard were not in the right mood to appreciate them though. There were several large round tables there, but the visitors had brought their own stools.

They had also brought along their government and Wanda Group

contracts. The meeting was hosted by some professionals.

"Grandpa Yang! I brought the new neighbors! Xiao Qin, this is Grandpa Yang. He is the coordinator."

"How are you, sir?"

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei entered hand in hand. The hearts of the strangers, who were about the same age as Qin Guan's parents, softened.

People were inclined to judge others by their appearance. Qin Guan got three spare stools for the old woman, Cong Nianwei and himself.

The manager had not been invited, but he was a shameless guy, so he found a brick on the ground and sat down on it. Thick skin was a job requirement for realtors.

"Did you buy a house in our hutong, Xiao Qin?"

"Yes!"

"Okay, let's just continue. You can ask questions anytime you like."

"First of all, we can't accept that price. They are offering only 8,000 yuan per square meter! That's outrageous for this area! We are no idiots!"

"Exactly! My house is 36 square meters. The money I will get is hardly enough for a house by the Fourth Ring!"

"The prices in Tongzhou have escalated to 4,000 yuan per square meter. How could people pay 8,000 for property by the Second East Ring? What a travesty!"

The price was ridiculously low.

"Let's discuss the area compensation contract, which is our second choice. We can exchange our houses with luxurious apartments in the suburbs. Let's just put the word "luxury" aside though and talk about the word "suburbs"! We are talking about

Huilingguan! That's outside the Fifth Ring! We have no idea about the quality of the houses there, but the ratio is two to one!"

"Does this mean that one house here equals two houses there?" an old man asked. A woman shook her head at him.

"No! They will be counting the area. A 30-square-meter house here is equal to a 60-square-meter house there. They will cover the difference."

Everyone started shaking their heads. They didn't want to live in such a remote area.

"And our last choice..." Grandpa Yang sighed. "Our last choice is moving back here. After the buildings are finished, some of them will be put on sale as commercial residential buildings, while others will be reserved for the original residents."

"The property developers will reserve a couple of buildings for us. We'll get the same area, but our building will be inferior to the commercial ones when it comes to interior design and facilities. The price difference will be determined by the market. Besides, we'd have to find a place to live after moving away."

This was not good news for the residents.

As an insider, Qin Guan had heard the news before the residents. According to the instructions of the headquarters, the real estate agency had to maximize its profit.

Qin Guan felt conflicted when he saw everyone's worried expression.

It's said that the program will be launched in 2004. Let's just take it easy...

The most favorable option out of the three was getting a new house in their original place of residence. After development was over, the prices of the area could increase by 10, 20 or even 30 times.

Qin Guan felt wronged on behalf of the old neighbors as he witnessed their unity.

# Chapter 637: National Day

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"I won't agree to such a contract!"

"Me neither! I like this area. Everything is perfect here, except for the outdoor public toilets."

"Yes. It's close to work and school. No one wants to live in the suburbs."

"Exactly. I have to go to the Dongzhimen Hospital to get some medicine for my mom every day, but it's still warm by the time I return home."

The neighbors' sentimental attachment to each other and their homes weakened the joy of moving away.

"Money shouldn't be a priority compared to common interests, right?"

"Yes!" everyone shouted together.

It sounded like they were blowing a battle horn against the cunning developers. They decided to have dinner together as a way to celebrate their union. Everyone carried dishes out to the yard.

Pig's feet were being boiled on a small stove. Two old women were serving as cooks. Typical Beijing cold dishes included shredded cucumber, pickles and fermented bean curd juice with sesame oil.

The old woman kindly replaced the brick the manager had been sitting on with a stool. The man sat down next to Qin Guan.

Unlike formal Western cuisine or some outstanding Chinese palace dishes, this was warm homemade food.

Stir-fried cabbage, braised pork and shredded potatoes with vinegar sauce were served with rice, and seaweed and egg soup were traditionally served with shrimp.

In a few minutes, the big bowls were filled with staple food.

There was rice and elastic steamed buns for old men. When the manager tried some hot pork the old woman gave him, he decided to betray his agency.

He would gladly act as a double spy.

After having dined and wine to satiety, Qin Guan and the manager parted ways. They just exchanged the annual rent, intentionally not talking about the other contracts.

They would have a tough battle ahead of them during the next year.

Back at home, Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei packed their luggage. They would be returning to New York the next day. Qin Guan turned down all invitations, interviews and offers. He entrusted everything to Sister Xue.

He and Cong Nianwei were planning on watching the national flag ceremony the next morning. It was National Day, so there was a traditional tourist program for Chinese visitors in Beijing.

Unlike in other foreign countries, the timetable of their ceremony followed the Beijing sunrise and sunset, which were calculated by the astronomers of the Beijing Observatory.

The national flag would be raised when the sun reached the horizon of Tiananmen Square. The exact time differed every year.

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei had lived in Beijing for many years. If they had not gone abroad though, they would never have attended the ceremony. Only when one lived in a foreign country did they realize how much they loved their homeland.

Because of their tight schedule, they had to watch the ceremony outside with their luggage.

At four o'clock, the janitors started cleaning Tiananmen Square. They had to get up earlier than their colleagues in other areas.

When they were done, the police stations in charge of the area

were ready to take over. The younger policemen got some weapons from their seniors.

They had to form a long warning line of several hundred meters from the west entrance of the National Museum to the east entrance of the Great Hall of the People, where the biggest number of spectators would gather.

Led by the policemen, the visitors lined up to enter the square. Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei were just in time. All the streets had been blocked by patrol wagons.

Everyone in Beijing knew that no cars or public transportation vehicles could stop at the square during National Day. One could get down at the stop before or after the square and walk from there.

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei had to struggle in the crowd with their luggage.

"There are so many people here! I came to watch the ceremony, not look at the back of their heads!"

"Shut up!"

The two of them walked hand in hand through the noisy, unfamiliar crowd. They felt unprecedentedly confident.

The front rows were reserved for seniors and kids, so the youth had to stand in the back.



# Chapter 638: I Love You, China!

---

Only in mysterious China could one experience the unlimited potential of humanity.

In any other country, it would have been scary to see 80,000 people gather on a square. Of course, India did not count.

Somebody lifted the eastern curtain to reveal a beam of sunlight, but the naughty sun was reluctant to come out. It just lightened the sky as a troop walked through the gate of Tiananmen.

At 6:05 a.m, a strong melody echoed around the square. "Across the mountains, across the plains, across the Yellow River and the Yangtze River..."

Suddenly, silence prevailed around the square, despite the thousands of people gathered there. Thirty six flag guards walked along the middle line, their powerful steps clear against the ground. The scene reminded everyone of the ups and downs China had experienced during the previous century.

When the guards reached the platform with the jade fence, four flag-bearers walked out.

"Stand up against slavery..."

At 6:11, one of the flag-bearers spread the flag against the wind. As the flag rose up, everyone started murmuring the national anthem.

"Stand up! Stand up! Stand up! With one mind, we march under the enemy's fire..."

The spectators sang louder and louder. Qin Guan took Cong Nianwei's hand as he sang devotedly.

No words could express his feelings. One had to be there to understand. Something surged in everyone's hearts. It was the words, "I love my motherland. Anywhere, anytime..."

When the flag reached the top of the pole, the ceremony came to an end. The soldiers retired together, leaving the flag blowing in the sky against the rising sun. Then a strange silence followed.

Not long afterwards, the spectators burst out together, expressing their emotions.

"Long live our motherland!"

"Long live the people!"

Their roars shook the sky without the help of a loudspeaker. People from different backgrounds had gathered there for that moment. It would be a memory they would never forget.

Everyone collected the trash from the ground before they left. They didn't want to leave any garbage on that holy place. The spectators left in order, as if in a dream.

On the way to the airport, the taxi driver chatted with Qin Guan.

"Did you see the ceremony?"

"Yes!"

"Are you going home?"

"No, just back to college."

"You seem like good students. You must love your country!"

...

Even after many years, that scene would still linger in Qin Guan's mind. He might forget some exciting job he had accepted, but he would never forget that ceremony.

"Those flag-bearers were so handsome..." Cong Nianwei murmured on the airplane.

As he was thinking about the possibility of trying on a uniform, Qin Guan received a phone call. It was Qu Xuemei, who took care of his work in New York. It was a temporary, but important job.

"Qin Guan, are you back?"

"Yes!"

"Let's get to work then. Check your email!"

The Public Advertising Service had the support of the New York City Hall and the local police. Both the social groups and the City Hall had taken action.

The slogan "Work With A Star" could be seen everywhere in New York. Posters of Qin Guan were pasted on the walls of shopping malls. His smile had spread all over the city.

Even ordinary citizens who never watched indie films or read fashion magazines had gotten familiar with the Asian young man through those posters. They considered him a guy who was very enthusiastic about community activities.

Unlike in China, in the US most work relative to city construction was carried out by the residents themselves.

# Chapter 639: Community Service

## Advertisements

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The government asked the residents to clean the roads, the pits and their household garbage after it snowed. Some also volunteered at the neighboring elderly homes, welfare homes, churches and childcare centers for free.

The City Hall wanted to encourage that behavior because, as a Chinese saying goes, the world is full of love. This was the dream of the New York mayor.

The police supervised the people sentenced to community service. For those people, doing community work was a real punishment.

It was a sunny day in autumn, and Qin Guan was in Qu's car. He was wearing a black hoodie and some LEE jeans, and there was a small tool set by his feet. His team included a cameraman and some social workers.

Their first stop was a school library. In America, senior students had to help their juniors with their homework for free.

Qin Guan entered the library. There was no applause. The kids were all too busy struggling with their exercises.

Qin Guan sat down next to them. A pair of students scratched their ears and cheeks in embarrassment. Not all good students could be good teachers.

Qin Guan was dressed like a pipefitter. "Do you need help?" he asked them with a friendly smile.

The two kids hurt him with their honest words.

"Mom was right. Handsome athletes only become pipefitters after graduating from school."

The younger one was much more impolite.

"Just like the idiot dating my sister. He is a nut."

Kids were terrible...

Qin Guan tried to suppress his anger by putting on a smile. "Actually, helping you with your homework is part of my community service."

They both shot a pitying look at him. "So you have nothing else to do?"

Qin Guan was speechless, but he still had to carry out his duty.

"Show me your book. What do you not understand?"

"This, this... Oh, and this one!"

So, you don't understand anything at all!

Qin Guan tried to explain. His clean, enlightening voice attracted all the children in the library.

"That man's voice sounds so good!"

Qin Guan tutored the kids before the camera. He seemed gentle under the warm light. All kids were angels. When one understood them, they realized they were all beautiful.

Their work on their first stop was successful. Thanks to Huang Jiajia's experience, Qin Guan was accepted by all the children. Just when he was about to leave, a small hand grabbed his jeans and two children put some candy in his hands. Some of it was homemade, while some had been bought with their pocket money.

Qin Guan craned his neck towards them. "Give me a farewell kiss."

He got some snot instead.

"Since we are friends now, I can admit that you are a handsome guy."

Before leaving, they gave Qin Guan some advice.

"Keep some distance from women!"

Qin Guan escaped as fast as his feet would move.

The cars departed, heading to their next destination. The children just shrugged and turned away.

The parks downtown provided New Yorkers with a green resting area. Collecting trash was part of their important community service.

# Chapter 640: Injustice

---

Qin Guan was holding a pair of large clips and a garbage bag in his hands.

Wherever there were humans, there was garbage that needed to be cleaned up.

The park service attached great importance to the event. When Qin Guan got out of the car, he realized that the park must have been cleaned that very night.

The trash bins, which were always full, were empty and clean, their usually dirty surface pure white. Both sides of the roads were clean of any dust and dirt. The lawn, where visitors liked to lie, was as clean as a plate before dinner.

Of course, there were a few mineral water bottles lying on the ground. They were very easy to spot.

Reality was cruel though. Qin Guan, who had very good eyesight, found some gum stuck to the bottom of the benches.

Gum was the average American's favorite snack. They stuck it everywhere after chewing it though, including under bus seats, subway station benches, park benches, and any other public facilities one could imagine. Chinese people might have bad manners, but at least they didn't chew gum.

Qin Guan picked up a paper cup from the ground. It had been left there on purpose by the park service. He swiped the bottom of a bench with the clips and the gum fell down into the cup like raindrops.

The park service staff flushed.

"Come on! We have a lot of work to do!"

His team took their tools out happily and copied what Qin Guan had done. They attracted the attention of the passersby, as they

looked quite different from social workers.

Some people gathered around to take pictures.

All the photographers in New York knew Qin Guan because, according to reliable sources, their idol Linn was about to suggest him for the cover of "TIME".

Linn was a distinguished photographer, so the news had spread fast among the photography circle.

What had attracted him to that model? Was he a big source of inspiration?

Some photographers were in pursuit of art, while others just wanted to get famous.

Are we meeting him here today?

"Qin Guan!" a young photographer cried out, catching the attention of the people in the park, who turned to stare at the group. Qin Guan stood out among them.

As visitors began to gather on the lawn, the director told his assistant, "Tell everyone to be on alert. If people get excited, we might have to leave as soon as possible."

"But they seem like nice people..."

"Idiot! Don't you remember the news in 'The New York Times' a few weeks ago?"

The assistant suddenly remembered what he was talking about. There had been an incident with some crazy fans and a miserable star on Times Square. That miserable star had been Qin Guan.

Crazy fans? Miserable star?

The two of them looked around and realized they had been surrounded in two minutes. There were photographers with cameras, professional dog walkers, runners... Everyone was interested in the shooting.



"It's too late, director. We are surrounded!"

"It's okay. Cheer up!"

Qin Guan was not affected by the crowd's presence. He just turned back with his cup, which was full of dirty gum. There was some dust on his face, and his loose pullover and grey plaid shirt made him look like an ordinary young man.

The audience felt his happiness and smiled.

"Finish your job!"

Standing up straight, Qin Guan showed off his achievement to everyone. His delight amused the crowd, which applauded him.

"Well done!"

"Cheers!"

The park service staff were jealous. Usually, people didn't like being reminded of the regulations, yet they were treating Qin Guan like an idol. It was unfair!

# Chapter 641: The Charity Bazaar

---

The director was reasonable.

"If you were as influential as a star, you would be the focus of the cameras."

The staff members were speechless. If we looked like that, we wouldn't be park rangers!

Qin Guan handed the garbage bag and the tools to the assistant. Qu looked worried as he waved at the crowd.

"Thank you for your support! I'm happy that so many people approve of my work. My work here is finished, so I will leave for my next destination. There is another important community service task waiting for me."

"I will be working at a charity bazaar for starving children all over the world. If you are interested, you are welcome to attend it. It's easy to find. It's just across the Hilton Art Fair, beside the J Clothing store. You could buy something, or do anything you can to help us!"

Qin Guan clapped his hands up to the sky. "For the starving kids of the world!"

Everyone clapped along.

After hearing about the charity event, the crowd walked away immediately, leaving only a few withered leaves swirling in the breeze around them.

The park keeper felt sympathy for the actor. His appeal was not enough to dig money out of the pockets of the New Yorkers. There was only a dog left on the large lawn, barking at them in protest.

Qin Guan tried to ease the atmosphere awkwardly.

"At least, I have a puppy supporting me."

Before his voice could fade away, a hand stretched out to take

hold of the leash.

"Sorry, I forgot it. It take care of so many dogs..." The dog walker took the dog and walked away as fast as possible.

Everyone shot a pitying look at Qin Guan. That young man does not know New Yorkers at all. Qin Guan craned his neck to look at the timetable in Qu's hands.

"What's our next stop?"

You just said it was the Hilton Fair.

Everyone ignored his embarrassment and set out for their next destination, where they would take part in a big activity.

When they got out of the car, they faced a big commotion. Housewives were bringing charity goods to the bazaar, which was organized by the community staff.

Guo Nuoyan had decorated the lawn nicely thanks to the support of J Clothing. It was a collecting field with dreamy colors.

There were balloons with the J Clothing logo everywhere. All the staff were wearing green uniforms, which were also provided by J Clothing. As the sponsor, Guo couldn't help but admire his masterpiece.

There were round tables with white sheets, packed with candy and biscuits. The household appliances, tools and clothing donated by the residents had been placed in the center of the lawn, along with some food samples.

A small stage had been set up right next to the tables for the host and the jazz band, who would play music during the break.

The overall arrangement was very orderly. The organizers were very experienced after all. Guo had also contributed a lot to the event.

Qin Guan's team attracted everyone's attention. Guo rushed over to him happily and gave him a big hug.

When they parted, Qin Guan looked confused. "Did they take a picture of us? How did I look?" Guo whispered.

Qin Guan looked at the cameras and realized his intention. He was using every chance he could to improve his image.

It was a pity that the film would be edited much later. "I was picking up garbage at a park right before I came here," Qin Guan warned him.

Guo started cursing.

# Chapter 642: The Good Packer

---

Qin Guan entered the hall with a small smile and saw Xu Xiaoxiao and Lan Jin among the staff, arranging the goods.

As Qin Guan's best friends, they were trying their best to help. When Qin Guan saw the volunteer security staff clearly, he wanted to find a quiet corner to rest.

It was Han Zhujiu and his men, all of them looking happy and energetic. They were all fierce, aggressive Asians.

Qin Guan forced a smile at Han and pulled Xu to a corner.

"What are they doing here?"

Xu grinned at him. "This is a newly-established security company! Those professional veterans will treat you like a national leader. Aren't they cool?"

Qin Guan nodded. Yes, but they better be legal. Otherwise, we'll see the headline "New York Police Catches Chinatown Gang Leader" tomorrow morning.

It was wonderful to see his compatriots set up a legal business.

Qin Guan relaxed and participated in the event with great enthusiasm. Before the cameras could get into position, the first wave of customers had already poured in.

They were the parents of the primary and middle school students of the area. They wanted to buy some biscuits and cakes made by their kids.

The food was cheap, but there was a large quantity. Samples were placed on the table, and the parents picked them up with a toothpick and tried them.

Qin Guan was busy selling goods, when he suddenly heard the young man in charge of the promotion team scream.

"There's so many customers! All the packed goods have been sold

out!"

"Is there anything left in stock?"

"Yes!"

"Why are you whining then? Pack everything up!"

The young man nearly burst into tears. "Look at that long line! I'm not a professional salesman. I'm too slow to serve them. They will lose their patience!"

The other guys also started to worry. Qin Guan put down the small plates he was carrying.

"Can you show me how to pack them? I have very fast fingers."

"You?"

They shot a look at Qin Guan's delicate fingers. They seemed unfamiliar with such hard work. Did he just want to show off?

A senior staff member rolled his eyes and told the young man, "There is strength in numbers! Just show Mr. Qin how to do it!"

The young man began wrapping a cake with shaking fingers. He was using a plastic box, some colorful paper and ribbons. A bow had to form in the middle of the ribbons. It was a complicated process and the young man was a volunteer, not a professional. It took him about three minutes to wrap one cake.

When they realized that the packages on the table were almost sold out, Qin Guan rolled up his sleeves and got to work.

That young man likes showing off.

Both the senior staff and everyone else was shocked by Qin Guan's eagerness.

As soon as he sat down, he put five empty boxes in front him in a row, his fingers dancing like butterflies between them.

He worked like a robot, his every move very exact. Before anyone could see the content of the boxes clearly, he had decorated them

with colorful paper and ribbons. He could wrap the boxes with one hand and make a bow with the other one. It took him only one minute to finish five boxes.

Despite his help though, the line did not get any shorter, as even more customers were attracted by his work. They all lingered around, reluctant to leave.

Half an hour later, Qin Guan looked up from the boxes and saw a crowd.

"Qin Guan, I'm the dog walker from the park. I came here to help because of you!"

"Qin Guan! I'll buy two more!"

"Qin Guan! Do it more slowly! I want to take a picture of you!"

The director behind the camera was so excited that he felt as if he was about to have a heart attack. This was all perfect material!

# Chapter 643: The Auction

---

He gestured at Han Zhujiu to stop him and then pointed to the red flags behind him.

"For the kids!"

Qin Guan addressed the audience loudly. "I could work on and on for you to watch, but you'd need to line up and buy something again. The donation box is over there. I'll be waiting for you here. Let's do this! For the starving kids of the world!"

He over-emphasized the fact that the stock would be sold out soon. What a cunning young man!

People lined up again, the customers leaving with the fruit of Qin Guan's labor. This was their lucky day. They had met a handsome guy and bought candy!

In the end, there were only crumbs left on the plates, which indicated that the charity bazaar had been a success. The unsatisfied residents turned their eyes to the stage, where a small-scale auction was taking place.

The auctioned items included an almost-new toaster, a child's tricycle, a professional tool kit and some high-end dresses.

As a participant, Qin Guan had brought his own item. It was a second-hand Citizen wrist watch worth about 50 dollars. He was only asking for 40 dollars for it.

The items were sold out one after the other. Qin Guan wasn't aware of the real value of the watch until the host showed it to the audience.

"This item was donated by our distinguished guest, Mr. Qin Guan! He wore it between 2001 and 2002, when he had just moved to America. At the time, he had still been a nobody travelling around the city with this watch as he looked for a job. He is a Citizen ambassador in Asia, so this is quite a meaningful watch.



The starting price is 40 dollars! It's a reasonable price for such excellent quality! The watch was made in Japan!"

"So..." He banged his hammer against the table. "Let's begin!"

As soon as he finished his introduction, offers started coming one after the other.

"50 dollars!"

"100!"

"150!"

"300!"

The last offer attracted everyone's attention. It was Qu Xuemei, who was still a fierce, determined woman.

Xu craned his neck around a pile of boxes. "Is your agent that rich?"

"Of course. She is the chief editor of VOGUE."

Qu bought the watch for 400 dollars.

Xu made a sound of admiration. "Before you graduate and return to China, could you please leave me all your second-hand belongings?"

Bills mounted in the donation box, while the goods were gradually sold out. The excitement faded away as the residents focused on Qin Guan.

The host, who was a funny old man, stopped everything for the activity and slowly held up the microphone.

"Today, we are here to welcome a new friend. He is the owner of 'Beauty of the World', a J Clothing ambassador and a two-time Best Actor Award winner in Europe. It's a handsome young man named Qin Guan!"

Applause echoed around the lawn.

"This is a rare opportunity for us to meet him. Would you like to

see him in an impromptu meeting at the end of this successful event?"

"Of course!"

"That's great!"

The unexpected proposal surprised Qin Guan and his team. This would be the highlight of their public-interest campaign. The director, who was very ambitious about his work, would turn the film into a documentary. Maybe it would even win an award...

Both parties were waiting for Qin Guan with delight. He looked at the small stage, which was not enough for any wild movements, and told Lan Jin, "Bring me a Xun, please."

Lan Jin ran to the gallery fast, while Qin Guan walked on the stage slowly. The stage was two meters long and one meter wide. If I dance on it, it will collapse.

Soon, Lan Jin came back with a Xun and handed it to Qin Guan.

# Chapter 644: TIME

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Qin Guan turned around to make an announcement.

"Hello, everyone! I'm a student from China. I would like to put on a performance for you by using the most ancient musical instrument. This will be the best example of Chinese music. I'll play some children's songs for you. I hope you'll like them."

Qin Guan took a bow. A thunderous applause came from the audience. Everyone was really curious about the small, egg-shaped thing he was holding. It looked like a bun. Was it really some kind of musical instrument?

Before the cameraman could capture all its details with his camera, Qin Guan put the instrument against his lips. The mysterious ancient instrument produced a clear tune.

"Oh! jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way... Oh, what fun it is to ride, in a one-horse open sleigh. Hey!"

The Americans were familiar with the first song, but they were surprised by the melodious tune. Qin Guan took a breath and shifted to the next song by pressing on different wind holes.

"There were three bears living together, Father Bear, Mother Bear and Baby Bear..." It was a South Korean song. Although the audience was not familiar with the foreign lullaby, they could feel its joy.

Children's songs were the best way to provoke playfulness in someone. Suddenly, Qin Guan switched to another tune.

The Xun was the perfect instrument for expressing sadness.

["A little girl named Cabbage, lost her mother at a young age..."](#)

Qu and Lan were left speechless by the tune, while the Americans were lost in it.

"It sounds so sad... Is it talking about starving children?"

"How moving! Qin Guan has prepared so well for the event!"

"It's fabulous! I didn't expect such a small thing to play such beautiful music."

"I want to learn!"

"Me too!"

Qin Guan's performance unintentionally increased the sales of Chinese musical instruments. At the audience's request, Lan organized a music class in an effort to make even more money.

When Qin Guan finished his performance, he realized the audience was crying.

"That was so moving! It was beautiful!" Americans liked to express their feelings openly.

The host announced the end of the bazaar with tears in his eyes. The director wiped his own tears from his face and shouted at Qin Guan, "Let's call it a day! Everyone has worked really hard!"

A staff member took a package of crushed cookies out of his pocket and shared it with Qin Guan's team. Everyone snatched the cookies up. They left one whole cookie for Qin Guan as a symbol of their love and appreciation.

Thank you for your hard work, your understanding and approval...

The next day, Qin Guan visited the office of TIME Magazine with Qu Xuemei. The two of them waited for Linn.

The door of the office opened and closed frequently as women of all ages walked by curiously. They were not there for Qin Guan. The influential magazine welcomed famous stars and VIPs from the political, economic and military circle every day.

They just wanted to take a look at the guy Linn had invited. Linn was an icon admired among the photography circle after all.

The chief editor was annoyed by the noisy environment. He was

angry with his good-for-nothing staff. It was only an Asian star after all. They had taken pictures of many Asian stars in 2003.

When the film "Heroes" had been in theaters in North America, they had put the four main actors, Zhang Ziyi, Liang Chaowei, Zhang Manyu and Li Lianjie, on the cover. At the time, people had had no idea who Qin Guan was. He had been a nobody who had only appeared in a film for a few minutes.

The magazine had also hosted Jay Chou, who had caused a musical craze in Asia. His one-word comment on the cover had been "Cool"!

"Get back to work!" the chief editor roared at the women.

Linn heard his roar and walked over, leading his team directly to the chief editor's office.

"Is the studio ready?"

"Yes! William, show him to the studio and let Qin Guan know that he can head to the dressing room!"

A famous sad children's song in China.

# Chapter 645: The Exclusive VIP Stylist

---

Everyone got to work fast as an assistant led Qin Guan to a professional dressing room.

The requirements were clear. The cover would be a large portrait, so Linn would capture only Qin Guan's face and neck. This naturally made things more difficult for the stylist.

Chris Sortleon, who cooperated with Linn very frequently, had been offered the job. She was considered the best stylist in America. Most of her clients were politicians, so she had never worked in the fashion circle.

Unlike her peers in the fashion circle, she looked like a politician herself rather than a stylist.

During the presidential election, she was invited by CNN to help the candidates of the two parties. She was good and prompt at her job. Three minutes were usually all she needed. The stylist was never disrespectful at such important occasions.

That was why she had gotten the job.

Chris had graduated from the South New Hampshire University with a degree in Commercial Management, but she seldom worked for people outside the political circle.

When Qin Guan walked in, she realized why Linn had invited her there. The young man was a muse for both photographers and stylists. He was a source of inspiration for all artists. Everyone would be happy to meet him.

Chris changed her attitude and adjusted her chair to match his height.

Qin Guan greeted the stylist politely. She was only wearing a pearl necklace. A pair of soft hands welcomed him.

There were no calluses on her hands. They felt smooth and very

warm. This was essential for a good stylist, so models would not be repulsed by their touch.

Chris studied Qin Guan before she sighed and murmured to herself, "His skin is perfect and his face is flawless! It was not a legend after all. Does this mean that I have to compete with Pat over a job at the fashion week?"

Chris shook her head. "No, this must be an exception. Models that live wild lives are not as fresh and bright as they seem."

She turned on all the lights to check Qin Guan's face more carefully.

"TIME tends to choose a red or blue frame for the person on their cover. Only deceased people get a black frame. You are too fair-skinned for a serious magazine though. TIME is very different from fashion magazines."

"We need some proper foundation..." she murmured as she got to work. She mixed several shades of foundation and compared the result to the back of her hand.

"Perfect! Antique brass will make you look more sophisticated and masculine. That's what old-fashioned readers like to see."

Qin Guan relaxed at her joke as her soft brush swiped across his cheeks, forehead and jaw.

Chris took a breath. "Oh, honey... Never smile at a woman like that."

The brush made Qin Guan feel itchy, so he just closed his eyes and smiled.

"There's no need for any blush or lipstick. Your lips are very moist. There's nothing else for me to do. I should just apply some toner to your face."

"Wow! Let me brush your eyebrows out, my boy..."

Qu was smirking. Qin Guan's face required no work compared to

the wrinkly faces of old politicians.

Soon, Chris waved Qin Guan away. "Okay, go to the studio before I do something else to impress the readers."

Qin Guan escaped as fast as he could. He felt wronged by her professional skill, but that was not his fault, was it?

An assistant led him into the professional studio. A portrait photo was just a trifle for the team, but Linn had still organized all their resources based on that. In Qin Guan's opinion, the old man was very serious about his job. Linn thought just as highly of him.

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# Chapter 646: The Illustrated Fairy

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He handed Qin Guan a colorful hardcover book.

"Take a look. It's Tasha's latest illustrations. The book will be available in bookstores soon. Considering her age, there won't be many of those getting published in the future. You were her muse, so it's a gift for you."

Qin Guan took it and looked at it carefully. There was a small farm village and some large letters on the cover. The book's title was "The Summer and Autumn Fairy".

He opened it and saw a green countryside. The colors were so tender that his heart nearly melted.

The protagonist of the story was a handsome young man with a pair of transparent wings on his back. He looked like a fairy from old fairy tales. He was good friends with squirrels and liked to play with a cow on the field. His magic stick could make flowers bloom and corn ripen. The neat haystacks on the field were also his work.

A girl was sleeping under an orange lamplight. She had been blessed by the handsome fairy. The story was composed by a series of paintings portraying the sweet dreams of a girl. In her dreamland lived a perfect fairy.

The book had a sweet, warm style to it. The candy-like colors were refreshing for the readers. The old woman was really good at narrating tales to children.

Qin Guan put the book in his bag carefully before he asked Linn about Tasha.

"My agent received a contract and some money from her. On second thought, I will accept it."

Linn had turned on the camera. "Just keep it. It might be nothing for either of you, but it's still the kindness of an old lady."

Qin Guan nodded and walked over to a chair. "So, Mr. Linn... You are not a very loyal friend. TIME is not paying me anything, but you could at least cover my cab fare."

Linn felt the impulse to throw the camera at him. He realized that the young man was a moneygrabber, but he tried to control himself at the sight of his perfect face.

"No star has ever asked TIME for any money. Just remember all the people who have been on the magazine's cover! Who do you think has gotten reimbursed for their cab fare? I'll give you double... No, five times the fare!"

Qin Guan sat up on his chair awkwardly and switched to working mode. His eyes were sparkling in the camera like a rising sun. Every person and prop around him suffered an eclipse.

After the first click, Qin Guan changed his expression slightly, impressing Linn. He was a professional model after all. Outsiders would not have been able to distinguish between the two expressions, but the pictures were actually quite different.

In one of them, Qin Guan looked like a strict politician, both handsome and bold. In the other, he was smiling warmly like the boy next door.

In two minutes, Linn had finished his job.

"Okay, Qin Guan. Let's call it a day. Wait till your face appears in bookstores!"

Qin Guan stood up when he saw Linn's students gather around him.

Was that it? It was much simpler than a fashion magazine photoshoot.

"It would be a waste to use him only for the portrait, sir. We'll be having a figure photography exhibition this year!"

Qin Guan and Qu fled in defeat. Photographers were so greedy!

The fairy was widely welcomed by the readers. Thanks to Tasha's talent and fan base, the book started selling like crazy.

By the time Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei walked to the nearest bookshop, there were only a few books left. The shop assistants were restocking the shelves, as kindergarten students were about to be dismissed. Parents always came to the store to select a bedtime story for their kids around that time. Tasha's books were their favorite.

Taking advantage of his height, Qin Guan seized a book from the shelf and opened it, striking a naughty pose at the cashier. It was the same pose as the fairy's in the illustrations.

He looked so silly that Cong Nianwei felt like crying. She forced a smile at the cashier. "Keep the change!"

Then she pulled Qin Guan away without looking back.

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# Chapter 647: Finding Faults

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A little girl standing next to her mother cried out. She took her finger out of her mouth and pointed at Qin Guan.

"Mommy, the green fairy!"

The cashier cried out in alarm. "I know who he is! He's the fairy from the book! It's Qin Guan!"

The woman looked both scared and confused. She pulled the little girl closer to her as the girl giggled.

Qin Guan blew the little girl a kiss. She was the first one to recognize him after all. The kiss amused the little girl.

It was a pity that his kindness was not reciprocated. The mother did not appreciate his gesture like a Chinese mother would have. She hid the girl behind her body.

"Stay away from my daughter!"

By that time, Qin Guan had been pulled out of the shop, the door blocking his view. It was the first time he had been treated with such hostility. He was completely dazed as Cong Nianwei sneered at him.

"This is America, not China. There are too many cases of child molestation and kidnapping every year. Any familiarity between adults and strange children is forbidden by the law, and the child's parents have the right to call the police."

Qin Guan shrank back in confusion. "How come you're so familiar with American laws?"

"You have been arrested once, remember? It's become a joke around campus, so some students from the Law Department started making plans so you could avoid a similar situation. It was hard for me to turn down a kind offer like that. When I visited their class, I found the topic very interesting, so I began to study

law in my spare time."

How fortunate I am! Other girlfriends go shopping in their free time, but my girlfriend studies instead.

His lovely girlfriend was worth a dinner at the BOULEY restaurant. It was the only upscale restaurant in New York where customers didn't have to dress formally. Plus, it served French food.

The French cook there was a huge fan of Kaiseki Ryori. Qin Guan booked a table for two through his firm.

"Come on, let's go out for dinner!"

Cong Nianwei smiled warmly in response.

The old-fashioned restaurant insisted on a standard menu of five dishes, ignoring the fact that some Americans had a bigger appetite.

The boss had figured out the perfect plan. He had placed a large wooden counter in the middle of the hall with dozens of French loaves.

If the food didn't satisfy the patrons, they could just head there with their plates. There was a waiter standing there who would cut loaves into pieces till the patrons ate their fill.

As a result, the restaurant was renowned for the sweet smell of its bread.

A waiter led Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei to their reserved table. When they took their seats, the waiter handed them two menus.

There were only two options, Meal A and Meal B. This was handy for people who had a hard time making up their minds.

The customers were waiting eagerly to try the strange dishes.

The first dish was really small. It was a crisp slice of konjac flour with a spoonful of truffle. If it wasn't for its sweet taste, Qin Guan would have complained about its price. Despite the lack of sugar,

the dish brought out the original taste of the food. It was a perfect combination.

The second dish looked like an ice-cream ball. Cong Nianwei nearly burst into laughter. Although Qin Guan had never tried such a smooth tomato paste, he still felt like crying. The small portion had left him unsatisfied. Even its good taste couldn't comfort a foodie like him.

The experienced boss realized that the familiar patron was on the verge of exploding. The young man lifted his arm, clenching his fist firmly.

"Waiter!"

Before the boss could head over personally, a waitress who had been admiring Qin Guan for a long time rushed over, wearing a sultry white apron.

"What can I do for you, sir?"

Her black skirt, white apron and black leggings made her look like a maid.

Qin Guan didn't look up. He was very concentrated on the menu. His slender finger pointed to the dishes one after the other as he spoke clearly, attracting the other patrons' attention.

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# Chapter 648: Internet Tycoons

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Silence prevailed in the restaurant as the customers waited to hear what the charming young man had to say. Did he want to express his admiration for the chef's cooking skills? Maybe... French cuisine was the best work of any Michelin cook and the favorite of food critics after all.

Maybe he had been shocked by the artistic design of the dishes and did not have the heart to even touch the painting-like gourmet plates. They were too beautiful to eat!

Unfortunately, Qin Guan did not say what they expected.

"Fifteen grams of konjac flour and three grams of Périgord truffle. These materials cost a lot, but the truffle is pickled. It can't cost much more than three dollars. The tomato smoothie weighs 20 grams, so it must cost 0.58 dollars."

"The other three dishes must cost 9.33 dollars in total. I spent 110 dollars on this meal, plus the 1.88% tax collected by the City Hall... What do you think of your prices?"

Stupefied, the waitress lowered her head until it reached her breasts. Suddenly, the other patrons decided that the food was not that tasty.

They looked at their dishes pitifully. Even the chef's top cooking skills couldn't arouse their appetite. Although French cuisine focused on high-end taste and style, its cost was just too high.

"Don't tell me that the ducks were fed dew and organic corn. All the ingredients were ordinary. My tongue can tell the difference."

The boss walked over personally, wiping beads of sweat away. The situation was about to get out of control. If the guy protested openly, all the patrons would refuse to pay their checks.

The man apologized carefully in an effort to prevent an uprising.

"I'm sorry, each meal includes five dishes, but we'll serve you four more as a bonus. There are actually nine dishes in total."

Qin Guan nodded generously at his explanation. "The loss in quantity could be compensated that way. Well done! It's a good idea to maintain a variety of dishes."

He gave the boss a thumbs-up with a meaningful smile.

The cook cried out in the kitchen. How can I make four more dishes from scratch?

He had no choice though. All the other patrons applauded. Some people who had already finished their dinner stayed for the bonus dishes.

The waiters hurried to serve all the patrons cakes, liqueur chocolate, fresh fruit with light cream, and Tangyuan served with rose petals and caviar...

The cook also had to make bacon and fried eggs. It was not an easy life for anyone.

People all over the world loved bonuses and gifts. The patrons raised their cups and made toasts to Qin Guan.

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei left the fine restaurant satiated. From that day on, the menu was changed. The five authentic French dishes still remained on the menu, but when the patrons started eating their dinner, other dishes would be served for free one after the other.

That considerate gesture satisfied everyone. As a result, the restaurant was booked up for the following year. Taking advantage of this, the boss opened another restaurant in New York, thus starting a competitive business franchise.

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei were sitting in a long luxurious car that looked more expensive than the one the godfather from Sicily had owned. There was a blank expression on their faces as Chris sat across from them, waving his arms and stamping his feet in joy.



Qin Guan had been tricked into cooperating with Chris back on the airplane. Then Sister Xue had given in to the high payment and said yes to the trip to Las Vegas. She still drew some lines when it came to magician shows though.

She would turn down all the bloody ones, but accept the safest ones, such as "Floating", which was suitable for a large stage. Thus, Qin Guan had agreed to the plan.

Another important reason for agreeing was Cong Nianwei, who had decided to participate in a construction competition with a big award along with Rongzhi.

The award was called "Open Design", a prize related to internet business. The competition was being organized by some young internet tycoons who wanted to promote the internet and show their overall plan to the whole community.

In order to avoid affecting the everyday lives of the residents, the IT geeks had thought of a plan. They were hoping that both the authorities and the general population would approve the development of a cable and optical network.

As uprising stars, they were much more active than old-fashioned financiers.

Their program attracted new designers of avant-garde style. The tycoons marked out an area in a small town and paid for the reconstruction rights.

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# Chapter 649: Small Bets In Las Vegas

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The selected teams would get a piece of land with a house in that area. Their designs had to match the internet facilities perfectly to create a brand new modern, high-tech community.

The final winner would be the team who made the most practical design at the lowest cost. It seemed like a typical competition, but it was actually a chance for the newly rich to share ideas and technologies with each other and show off about their fortunes in the process.

The award was very alluring for the young architects. The tutors at Columbia stressed the importance of practice and encouraged their students to participate in such competitions.

The team was composed by Cong Nianwei, Rongzhi and some other students. Thanks to Cong Nianwei's business qualification certificate, they overcame all difficulties on their way to their destination. The final competition would be held in Las Vegas.

Las Vegas was the holy land of wealth and gambling. Many people were fascinated by the city's charm. It was an oasis in the desert, and most towns around it lived on the tourists attracted by the casinos.

The boring tycoons had found a small town in that area that fit their plan. Meanwhile, Chris had decided to hold a grand performance before visitors from all over the world.

The weather in late October was great in Las Vegas, as the city enjoyed an inland desert climate. Tourists from all directions went there to have an extraordinary time.

The small casinos had initially attracted the cowboys before growing into a world-famous industry. Billionaires in search of an opportunity went there to get a share of the profits. Japanese tycoons, Arabian princesses and Hollywood stars invested in the

industry one after the other, thus helping along the development of tourism and entertainment in the surrounding area.

As a result, Las Vegas had become a truly sleepless city.

The Blue Man Group Theater, which could hold thousands of people, was located in the center of the city and had the most luxurious lighting and sound equipment. Only a theater like that could meet Chris' demands.

A professional model had to be responsible and reliable, so Qin Guan went to the theater, where Chris was waiting for him for the rehearsal.

He stood on the stage for a long time as the crew worked around him. Nobody came over to check on him. Aren't they afraid I'll screw everything up tomorrow?

Confused, Qin Guan walked over to Chris, who looked like a zombie.

"What do I have to do? When will the rehearsal begin?"

Chris shot a strange look at him.

"You don't have to rehearse. Just come here one hour early tomorrow."

"I know nothing about floating. Shall we try..."

"No point. I'm in charge of the performance. All you have to do is float."

You are such a good professional. Don't blame me if I screw up tomorrow.

The innocent young man left the theater and headed back to his hotel. He still had some spare time, but the dry wind made his heart itchy. Cong Nianwei was still in that small town. Qin Guan heard his money cry in his pocket.

He took a small turn and joined a group of excited tourists that was heading to a luxurious casino named SLOTS.

What an arrogant name. I like it!

Actually, this was the first time Qin Guan was entering a real casino, but he had used to play such games at school, so it would be easy for him to learn the rules.

Despite his self-consciousness, he decided that he would be a good student.

There were only a few options in the casino. The most popular one was the slots, the toughest test of luck was the roulette, and the game that required the most skill was Black Jack. Qin Guan even saw some mahjong tables in a corner of the hall, designed to meet the demands of the Asian visitors.

Qin Guan, who was a typical penny pincher, chose the slots. He stood and watched some other visitors play with relish.

Most of the guests were there for the casinos, and the slots were the best choice for a man with a strict wife, as they cost only 0.01 dollar per round.

After watching a few machines, Qin Guan understood how the slots worked. The rate of return had to be adjustable, but it was set to 90%.

This meant that if one spent one dollar to play 100 times, they would have 0.9 dollars left. Of course, those lucky dogs that won big were not included.

As a rich guy, Qin Guan had to make a big bet. His status called for it, so he decided to bet 0.2 dollars.

He threw one dollar into the slot. He could play for a long while with it. As he sat before a machine happily, a strong man next to him looked at his bare hands in disdain. He must be a poor guy. He will just gamble away all his money and leave soon.

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# Chapter 650: Acting Skills Vs. Gambling Strategy

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The man shot a proud look at his own tray, where the coins were getting fewer and fewer. He felt sad about his luck, but he was suddenly startled by the cry of the Asian man.

"Ha! I won!"

Coins were pouring out of the machine as Qin Guan squatted down and stuffed them in his pockets. When both his pockets were full, he took a coin out and kept gambling.

"Beginner's luck..." the man murmured to himself jealously. He pushed the button angrily, but got nothing in return.

The guy next to him shouted happily, "Ha! I won again!"

He couldn't help but crane his neck towards the Asian man. "Hey, dude. How much did you win?"

"60 dollars in total!"

The strong man rolled his eyes and pulled a trick that was useful for beginners.

"Do you know the first law of slots?"

"What's that?"

"The probability of winning decreases after two winning rounds. See? Everyone is changing machines!"

Qin Guan took a look at the other gamblers, who cooperated with the man. They were all frequent patrons of the casino.

Qin Guan expressed his appreciation for the man's advice. "Thanks, bro. Without your help, I would have lost everything. You saved my motel money!"

The man handed him a box kindly.

"Take it. The security here is good. You can change your coins to bills at the reception."

"Okay, thanks a lot!"

Qin Guan threw his coins into the box and left for another row of machines. When he disappeared from view, the man grinned and took his seat.

It was said that there was always a lucky slot machine in every casino. If one was able to find it, they would win dozens of times in one night.

The man believed that myth, so he threw a coin into the machine and pressed the button nervously. He heard the crisp sound of coins, but nothing came out.

All the gamblers fixed their eyes on the machine pouring out coins. It was the Asian man again.

He must have won more than 100 dollars. Qin Guan could not even hold the money in his hands, so he changed it into 200-dollar chips. Considering his initial capital, he could afford to play some more games.

Black Jack was a very popular card game in Western countries. The players compared the sum of their cards to the banker's. Because of the limited cards in each player's hand, the players could apply statistics to the game and fight the banker by using their good memory.

Qin Guan did not want to abuse his luck at the casino, but he liked playing and studying, so he sat by the table of a blond dealer.

The dealer looked up and saw an Asian man in ordinary clothes. If it was not for his handsome looks, he would have seemed like a common visitor.

When he saw the Asian man take out a five-dollar chip, he was left speechless. He must be a poor man. He is no star or VIP.

Feeling at ease again, the banker glanced down at his own cards and then at Qin Guan's nervous expression. The Asian man shifted his eyes between the cards on the table and his own hands. As an experienced dealer, he knew that the greenhand had 17 points and was considering whether to ask for more cards or not.

He was right. After a few seconds, Qin Guan suppressed his desire for more cards and threw his cards into the pile. He quit the round.

The dealer swiped the chips away calmly. That might have been a lot of money for the guy, so he threw a 10-dollar chip on the table.

As expected, he lost again.

Qin Guan banked out his leftover chips, which were worth 185 dollars. The dealer looked at him mercifully. Young men are always so excitable.

The dealer had 20 points in his hand. The young man had the same expression on his face, yet this time he did not hesitate to ask for a third card.

"One more?"

Qin Guan shook his head hard.

"No... Show me!"

Qin Guan won, 21 to 20.

The odds had been 1 to 2. His chips had now been doubled.

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# Chapter 651: The Casino Staff

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The Asian man suddenly changed completely. He leaned against the back of his chair, crossed his slender legs and raised his jaw at the dealer.

"One more!" Everything changed from that point on.

Qin Guan transformed into an experienced gambler. He was steady and calm, his outstanding skills misleading the dealer again and again. There were no cracks on his poker face for the dealer to take advantage of.

Qin Guan's secret weapons were his computing skill and good memory. Chips started mounting in front of him. Sometimes he threw a small white chip in, and sometimes he pushed them all in the circle.

In a few minutes, the young man had earned about 10,000 dollars. A crowd had gathered around the winner. Even the barmaids shuttling around the hall were attracted by his handsome looks and the chips in front of him.

"Do you need someone to count the chips for you, young man?"

"I'm free tonight, darling..."

The girls, who were all wearing revealing dresses, kept flirting with Qin Guan.

A rich handsome guy was much better than an old bald fellow after all. They all wondered if the Asian man had any interest in them.

They left when they noticed his ordinary clothes though. They were classy beauties, not some poor girls wandering the streets. They had enough time and capital to meet the demands of VIP clients. They had recognized Qin Guan immediately, as the young man was featured frequently in their favorite magazines.

They knew that he preserved his moral integrity like a monk, and they were sure about their own charm. None of them could be mentioned in the same breath as Paris Hilton, Madonna or Britney Spears.

If they flirted with Qin Guan, they might lose some other clients. Only a shameless girl eager to get famous would do that, but those kind of girls were unpopular in their industry.

There were no girls around Qin Guan anymore. Only some crazy gamblers sat beside him, their eyes fixed on him, as if he was a sparkling diamond.

The chips fell down on the table again with a clatter. The dealer wiped cold sweat from his face again. The manager of the casino was watching the table through the monitor.

"Do you need help?"

There were always some good gamblers in every casino, hired to detect any cheaters and check if any staff members colluded with the gamblers. The manager was itching to see Qin Guan succeed. He could sense that the young man was not a cheater, but someone who relied on his skills.

Every casino had a blacklist that included famous card contest competitors as well as notorious cheaters. Those people were not allowed to set foot in a casino.

That Asian guy had a clean record though. The manager ran a background check on him on the internet just as Qin Guan won his fifth round.

He hadn't expected to find dozens of news articles about him. He read them all with great interest, forgetting completely about the game. When his staff reminded him, he coughed awkwardly.

"Okay, you go watch the table. Be careful. Don't scare the guests away."

The joker of the casino walked out of the office speechless. I'm a

gentle man. I'm not some monster!

One minute later, he appeared on the monitor. He walked to Qin Guan's table without hesitation and patted the blond dealer on the back.

"Good job. You can take a break."

Then he performed a short investigation, using the micro inductor in his hand. He is clean. He is not cheating.

The man was very excited. A skilled opponent was a good stimulant for people like him. He decided to have a small gamble with Qin Guan. This was not unheard of for the casino staff.

I could set a top limit so he doesn't lose too much money.

The man took the place of the dealer.

Humans were very strange beings. Dancers were elegant, fashion insiders were weird and eccentric, and people with a high social status had an invisible oppression about them. Different environments cultivated different temperaments.

Qin Guan sensed something different about the gambler though. As a Chinese boy who had grown up watching classic Hong Kong gambling films, Qin Guan was familiar with such guys.

# Chapter 652: The Magic Show Prop

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Qin Guan counted his chips curiously. They were worth about 100,000 dollars. Will the casino go bankrupt?

He grew nervous, and so did the crowd, who wanted to see the world in chaos. They were all excited to watch a duel between two talented men. This was even more fun than an erotic dance!

People gathered around the table as Qin Guan shot a secret look at the dealer. Cards flashed before his pupils.

J, 9, 4, 6, 6, K...

J, 9, 4, 6, 6, K...

"Shall we continue, sir?" the new dealer asked Qin Guan with a smile. Before he could reply, a familiar voice was heard from the crowd.

"There you are, Qin Guan!"

Qin Guan saw Cong Nianwei walk over to him. He had no time to pretend. He just stood up to welcome her.

"Did you get my message?"

"Yes!"

"Wait a minute, I have to gather my money. We'll have a big dinner tonight. My treat!"

Qin Guan turned around to put all the chips in his box. Just as he was about to follow Cong Nianwei out, the dealer came back to his senses. He nearly fainted in reaction to Qin Guan's behavior.

"Are you leaving, sir?"

Qin Guan, who was focused on his girlfriend, answered him impatiently, "I have both a good eyesight and good memory. The next cards would be J, Q, 10, 8. You wouldn't ask for more cards. I'd give up and lose 5 dollars to you or an even bigger amount, as

the next card would be 3. No, thank you. I'd rather go. You are welcome!"

Qin Guan let out a sigh of resignation and ran away with his chips. The dealer was standing stupefied behind the table as the Asian caller tried his best to suppress his laughter.

The caller gently picked a fifth card out and shuffled the cards again. Qin Guan was an international award-winning actor after all. He had good reason to run away, as the fifth card was a 6, not a 3, which was an unfavorable card for him.

The audience had no idea about that though. The strong man took Qin Guan's lucky seat proudly.

A Chinese fortune teller would make a big fortune in Las Vegas. Gamblers were the most superstitious people in the world.

"Ha ha!"

The manager, who had witnessed everything through the monitor, sat back, lost deep in thought. His white Arabic head scarf slid down his shoulders.

The Asian lovers got out of the casino with a roll of bills. When she saw the proud smile on Qin Guan's face, Cong Nianwei realized that he must have played some kind of trick. A winner was better than a loser though, so she decided to let it go for the sake of the money.

Qin Guan headed to the Blue Man Show Theater early the next day. He was in a very good mood as the stylist led him to a professional dressing room. The assistants had spread a plastic film on the floor.

"Please take off your clothes, sir."

"All of them?"

"No, you can keep your underwear on."

Qin Guan let out a sigh of relief as he undressed. There was a

heater in the room, so he didn't feel cold.

A painter began to paint colorful patterns on his body, using a mixture of wild olive oil and golden powder. Soon, Qin Guan's skin was a glittering golden color. Only his face still looked normal.

His color was even brighter than the 18 brass figures of the Chinese Martial Artists in the Shaolin Temple.

His hair was colored white. When everything was finished, he looked like a mythical god. The costume provided by the prop team confirmed his theory.

The loose costume was more like a sheet. The crew wrapped him in it, leaving one of his shoulders and legs exposed. Then Qin Guan put on a pair of Greek-style shoes with laces.

As he stood before the mirror, Qin Guan wondered what kind of magic show he would take part in. When he saw Chris' costume, he felt grateful for his sheet.

Chris looked like a zombie after dinner. He had a big bloody mouth and sharp fangs. Qin Guan, who was an experienced insider of the fashion circle, stood before Chris calmly as the man moved around him, gasping in admiration.

"What shall I do next? Should we go through the performance in advance?"

Chris took his eyes off Qin Guan's body and clapped his hands.

"Oh, that reminds me! We haven't had a rehearsal! Come with me!"

Qin Guan followed the unreliable man through the red curtain that led to the stage. There was a chair in the center of the stage. The chair was welded to a steel bar, which was connected to a base on the floor.

The chair looked like an umbrella. It was floating in the air, a thin steel prop holding it above the floor.

"Prop team!"

At Chris' order, his assistant took out an ascending angle bracket. Qin Guan suddenly realized what his task was.

# Chapter 653: An Excited Audience

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"Up!"

Okay, you are paying me. You are the boss.

Qin Guan climbed up two meters high before he warned the people holding the ladder for him, "Careful, I'll let go now."

Then he moved to the chair and sat down steadily on it.

Several elevators were placed around him as the assistants got to work. They fastened a strong transparent wire to Qin Guan's body, to make sure he'd be safe. It was a very high-tech product. Even if the chair was broken, Qin Guan would just hang in the air.

The prop master hid the chair from the audience by using Qin Guan's loose costume, and the lighting master took advantage of the different lights and colors of the curtains.

When all the ladders were pulled away, Qin Guan was sitting up in the air like a god.

"What do you think?"

"It's marvellous! I have never tried anything like this before. When you look down from that height, the audience seems very small!"

Fortunately, Qin Guan was not anxious.

The problem was how he would get down. Before Qin Guan could ask that question, he felt the chair descending slowly.

Isn't it fixed to the pole? How can it move?

Chris pointed to the floor. "The base can rise and drop. Don't worry, it's strong enough to hold you."

Then he pointed to the auditorium proudly and said, "Today, I will shock everyone. They will never forget my awe-inspiring performance. I am Chris after all!"



He meant what he said. He really shocked the audience.

Compared to all the strip shows taking place in Las Vegas, Chris' brilliant performance made him seem like a monster of the night. When he entered the stage leisurely floating in the air, screams broke out among the audience.

His tour to Las Vegas, which had been promoted earlier that year, had attracted loyal fans who followed him everywhere. They screamed and cried to encourage him.

"You are a messenger sent by the devil! Admit it! Please accept me... I'll sacrifice my soul to you!"

"Save me! I'm your most faithful believer!"

Qin Guan was shocked by the rogues running wild in the audience. Is this some evil cult or something? It certainly is no common audience! It's like a gathering of lunatics!

He had no time to leave though. Led by Chris, he floated out of the backstage area slowly.

Suddenly, an anthem rang out like a church choir. Qin Guan entered the stage solemnly. All eyes were fixed on him as he knocked his sceptre against the floor and hovered in the air in a sitting position.

As the tune rose higher and higher, so did Qin Guan. Suddenly, Chris moved towards him, meeting him in mid-air.

The scene looked like the meeting of an angel and a demon. One was a pure, sparkling figure, while the other was the personification of evil and ferocious desire.

"AH!"

Deafening screams rang out as flashlights were turned on. Qin Guan couldn't see anything when he looked down.

When Chris reached him, they looked at each other in the air, blue lights being projected around their bodies to form a cold halo.

"War... Doom... Destiny..." Despite Chris' provocation, Qin Guan showed mercy. He looked at Chris as if he was an ant and slowly lifted his sceptre.

There were no lines. No script. He just had some general instructions to follow. The audience had to use its own imagination. Qin Guan looked like a real god. That was the difference between different races.

The loyal fans, curious visitors and local residents witnessed an epic, poetic performance in the luxurious theater. Words couldn't express their feelings. The thrilling scene touched their souls.

Qin Guan raised his sceptre proudly, as if he wanted to brush off a tiny bug stuck in his eye. No creature could disturb him.

He pointed the sceptre casually at Chris like a judge from Heaven. His golden skin and white hair couldn't disguise his graceful demeanor.

Struck by his power, Chris bent forward and fell down slowly like a broken butterfly.

"Ah!" the audience cried out in unison. They thought it was a terrible accident. When his head was only half a meter away from the floor, he started floating again as if he was in space.

"Oh!"

He had earned everyone's admiration.

# Chapter 654: Penny

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Qin Guan did not get angry. He just retracted his sceptre and fell into deep thought. This was not worth his attention.

He acted like he'd just flicked an ant from his clothes and continued along his way, not caring about the creature's sorrow.

The chair began to descend slowly. Before it reached the floor, the wire pulled him up and he moved down leisurely. His tiptoes touched the sparkling stage before he turned around and disappeared without making any eye contact.

The background music suddenly stopped. Chris climbed off the floor and struck a lively pose before the audience.

Bang!

Pure white feathers fell from above, the splendid scene putting an end to the show. Satisfied by the spectacle, the audience clapped hard. This was a big honor for the performers.

The audience members bought bouquets and flower baskets for the actors. The curtain fell down. The next show was about to begin.

Actresses were dancing and singing happily to ease the atmosphere and comfort the nervous audience. Backstage, the stylist was busy applying a deep cleansing oil to Qin Guan's body.

"I'll clean it as much as I can, but you have to be careful when you bathe at home. At first, your skin will be more yellow than it was before. It will take a few baths with essential oil for the paint to be completely removed."

Qin Guan nodded casually, not taking his advice seriously. On the way to Cong Nianwei's competition though, his girlfriend kept making fun of his skin.

He had to get some kind of treatment immediately.

The show also aired on TV in Nevada and made the headlines of the newspapers with the largest circulation in the country. Chris' team was very good at handling publicity.

The high attendance and gifts from the audience covered the expenses of the whole tour. As a special guest, Qin Guan would get one percent of the total ticket income, excluding the fixed appearance fee.

Qin Guan earned 50,000 dollars for the ten-minute show. Plus, he also enjoyed some free publicity.

He had become a trend-setter in the fashion circle. His performance had created more options for models. Thanks to the development of technology, all industries and performances had to keep up with the times. Otherwise, they would be weeded out.

The TV show host shouted at the camera excitedly after watching the thrilling fight between Qin Guan and Chris.

"That was a real performance! It touched my soul right to the core. Qin Guan deserves all his acting awards! Those arrogant Hollywood stars should be ashamed! They waste such good resources on producing trashy films. If you can't do your job, let that Chinese man take over!"

Americans liked irony, but being an Asian was actually a shortcoming for Qin Guan. If he had been American, he would have received countless scripts after winning an award at Cannes. Instead, the investors had waited and observed the success of his two films.

Qin Guan was a broad-minded guy, so he was not annoyed by that. He knew that if he returned to the embrace of his motherland, countless scripts would be waiting for him.

Before he could finish reading the news reports, the bus had reached their destination. It was the house assigned to Cong Nianwei's team. That day, the organizing committee would

announce the winner.

Competitors arrived one after the other. This was the final round, so they were all capable and experienced.

The architectural industry was very strict and precise. Cong Nianwei's partners seemed much younger than the other competitors. Everyone in the room was dressed formally. Even Qin Guan, who was an insider of the fashion circle, was treated like an official.

# Chapter 655: A Superficial Selection

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The temporary Columbia team was demonstrating its youth and energy. Their only advantage was that the professional teams had no interest in talking with young students. This made them feel at ease.

Nobody was looking at the deserted stage, as it was not the time for the results to be announced yet. This was not a lively entertainment show, so no staff was needed.

Actually, everyone was wrong. Every person present was being monitored, from the first person to arrive in the meeting room, to the last one to take their seat nervously.

The monitors were the sponsors of the competition and the developers of the new internet community. Those young rich men had used their family wealth to take advantage of the internet. Combining the industry with commerce was the best way to challenge the stereotype that the internet was a futile economy.

Of course, it was hard to tell if it was the real estate industry or the internet that were futile. This was enough for ordinary people though. At least they could see something tangible instead of a theoretical concept. They would gladly pay for that.

The young billionaires were quite different from old billionaires when it came to business. They were a lot more frivolous, but the cunning decision-makers on their team planned on selecting the final winner carefully.

When they saw that the eight remaining designs had their own merits and no obvious flaws, the young men decided to follow their hearts.

The meeting room, which was where the monitors were installed, became the final place of the selection.

"Look at that old fellow! He is adjusting his tie and asking his

assistant to prepare a statement for him. He is so confident!"

The man, who was a middle-aged designer, was the one with the most seniority and abundant power among the candidates. Sadly, he was considered too old to win.

"Look at the two girls on those two teams. I'll bet you 100 dollars that they are enemies. They must hate each other, because one of them has bigger boobs and a flatter bottom than the other."

The young man had to be a mind-reader. That certainly explained his success.

The unreliable judges cried out when Cong Nianwei's team entered the room.

"F\*ck! Those guys are younger than us!"

"Let me see... They are the Architecture Department of Columbia University... That explains it..."

"Ah!" one of them screamed. The others glowered at him.

"It's Qin Guan!"

"What?"

"Where is he?"

The yacht club of the Chinese students had penetrated the local circle, so Qin Guan's name was brought up frequently among Chinese people. He was an idol for them, so he attracted a lot of attention from local rich men.

A model was not worth their attention, but a young man with his own fashion studio, accounting firm and gallery at such a young age was famous amid the younger generation.

That was when they spotted the mysterious man at their competition. Did this mean that the busy man was trying to find more career opportunities through their contest?

They were reading too much into the situation. Qin Guan had no

idea they even existed. He had nothing to do with architecture. He was just sitting silently in the back row of the meeting room, trying his best to remain unnoticed.

He had only gone there for his girlfriend.

The trees liked their calm and quiet, but the wind would not subside. The people behind the monitors got excited.

"Let me see! What is he doing here?"

"Search online! Are there any news reports about him?"

Brian, who was the only sensible person among them, suddenly realized something.

"If my memory serves me, his girlfriend must be a student at Columbia. Look!" He pointed at the screen. "Isn't that Asian girl his girlfriend?" he asked the others.

"So what do you think? Who should win?"

"The eighth team, of course!"

"Qin Guan's team!"

"I'm on Qin Guan's side!" they all said together. The old friends burst into laughter.

"Their design meets the requirements. Plus, it's simpler and more convenient than the other designs."

"Most importantly, they chose cheaper materials. The property tax won't scare young people away."

"The most important thing is..."

"Ha ha..." Everyone laughed proudly with their hands on their waists.

"Microsoft and IBM are suppressing us on all fields. Peripheral industry, prospect investment, employee development... Even their private doctors are better than ours. We finally have something they don't!"



"Yes! When the residents settle in, we'll tell the media that Qin Guan is our architect's boyfriend!"

"Yeah!"

# Chapter 656: The First Positive Feedback

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They cunningly decided who the winner of the competition would be. The prize would become a legend. If Cong Nianwei knew about its underlying meaning, she would have found it both funny and annoying.

Everyone was waiting for the final moment in the meeting room. Suddenly, the curtain on the stage rose.

The procedure was supposed to be simple. The host would present the winning design and announce the winner. Then one of the sponsors would give away the prize on the stage.

However, when those funny guys saw Qin Guan, they decided to change their original plan and make a few corrections to the host's cue cards. As a result, the ceremony went like this...

"The critical moment has come. I will be announcing the winner! Who will it be?"

The host unrolled the background poster. "It's the team from Columbia University and their design 'New Power'! Let's welcome the chief architect, Ms. Cong Nianwei, to the stage with the warmest applause!"

Although the other contestants were disappointed, they clapped sincerely for Cong Nianwei's team.

The young students' talent had been acknowledged before they had even entered the circle. Even Cong Nianwei, who was the calmest person among them, had tears in her eyes. Rongzhi, who was in charge of all the details, had tears and mucus flowing down his face.

Cong Nianwei stood up and embraced every member of her team before she walked to the stage nervously. The host handed her a spare microphone.

"The lucky girl is here! Let's invite our sponsors, Brian, LC, MG,

and Tom to present her with the prize!" the host said, applauding happily.

Usually, one sponsor was enough for the presentation, but a fight had taken place backstage. Everyone had fought over who would get the chance to present the award. The host had tried to calm everyone down, but it had been in vain. Before his voice could fade away, the four men rushed to the stage impatiently.

The audience applauded in confusion. Wasn't this a little too much? Maybe the men just liked being in the spotlight.

"Congratulations! Congratulations!"

"We are looking forward to cooperating with you in the future!"

"Here is your award, Ms. Cong Nianwei."

"Don't push me! I almost fell off the stage!"

"There you are, Cong Nianwei! Ah! Stop pushing me!"

The audience was totally speechless. The stage was too small to hold so many people, but they all stuck to their posts, for fear of being absent from the ceremony. After the commotion, Cong Nianwei finally got the award.

It looked like a unique cup for athletes. The base was round, and the cup itself was an unconventional belt with blue and white crystals.

Before Cong Nianwei could express her gratitude, three of the sponsors fell off the stage screaming, leaving Brian alone on the podium. Taking advantage of the situation, Brian smoothed down his hair.

"Congratulations, Cong Nianwei!"

"Thanks!"

They shook hands firmly.

The clever host was hidden behind the curtain as Brian handed

Cong Nianwei the check. The paper was still warm from his touch.

The check was worth 250,000 dollars, which exceeded most standard architecture prizes.

The other three sponsors had no time to climb up to the stage again. All they could do was hit the stage with their fists angrily as they watched Cong Nianwei leave with the prize.

Cong Nianwei did not shake hands with them. She thought they had just showed up for fun.

She returned to her team and handed the cup to her partners. Then she embraced Qin Guan. Money meant nothing to her. It was the award that made her happy.

This was her first award, but considering her age, she was a very promising young architect.

"Qin Guan!"

"Yes?"

"I have contributed to our award display!"

These were the sweetest words in the world. It was the first time Cong Nianwei was expressing her decision to spend the rest of her life with him. She had accepted his implied proposal. Life was wonderful!

Qin Guan hugged her tightly. His dream had come true that day!

# Chapter 657: The Shaolin Temple in New York

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A familiar fragrance lingered in his nose, but the warm feeling of Cong Nianwei's embrace reminded him that this was not an illusion. They had made a lifetime decision very casually. From then on, they would share a common goal.

Their hearts were beating fast as they looked at each other, smiling knowingly. Qin Guan encouraged himself mentally. I must win more awards in order to realize my dream.

As they were enjoying those tender moments, the audience began to leave orderly. The sponsors were amazing. Before they left, they gave them envelopes with flight tickets for their trip back home.

Everyone, winners and losers included, was satisfied, except for the three unlucky sponsors. The shameless men rushed over to Cong Nianwei.

"Hi!"

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei got scared when they saw the members of the organizing committee standing around them in a circle with smiles on their faces. The four sponsors were among them.

"Hello! We would like to greet you again."

Four pairs of hands stretched out towards Qin Guan. "Your name precedes you..."

"Ha ha! Now I can show off to my girlfriend that I touched his hand!"

"Do you like to play ball games? Tennis, basketball, golf... Shall we go play together?"

They were all talking at once as Qin Guan looked at them in shock. He realized that he had unwittingly acquired some new

admirers thanks to the Chinese students' promotion.

This made him feel under pressure. It was the first time he was not being praised for his looks, but his achievements. He was actually being treated as a talented businessman. They all exchanged cards and decided to meet in their spare time. The four men couldn't wait to have their companies evaluated by Qin Guan's firm.

They all believed in his work. They had stolen the computers of some accounting firms and compared the data. As it had turned out, QC's services were the best.

They wanted to know about their market capitalization in the future after repeated financing and investments, and how they could purchase small businesses effectively with their current capital.

The Hilton Hotels gave them some direct feedback. The group had trusted 10 more hotels to QC in the past few months. This was a good indication of the firm's success.

As more and more Asian accountants joined it, the firm gained an advantage over other traditional firms. Asians were very keen and they enjoyed boring statistics work as much as malt sugar.

In other words, they were all complete workaholics.

Actually, Qin Guan preferred being lazy, but he couldn't turn down such steady work. Cong Nianwei was a good stimulus for him as he worked hard to prepare for the party of the police union.

Exam season was over, so after the party, he and Cong Nianwei would return to China to enjoy the Spring Festival.

Encouraged, Qin Guan wrapped himself up in his coat to withstand the piercing New York wind. He was walking to his first stop for the day, the Shaolin Temple of New York.

That absurd name was the only way Americans could learn about the real Shaolin Temple, Chinese martial arts and Buddhism.

Established by Master Guolin, the true successor of the 34th generation of the Shaolin Temple in China, the scaled-down version of the Chinese temple had been in New York for a full four years.

The temple was not far from the commercial streets of the Flushing District. It had actually been constructed by Master Guolin himself.

In 1999, after his fifth year in America, he had decided to build the temple with the help of some faithful believers and a bank loan. His only aim had been to promote Chinese martial arts. The Shaolin Temple was actually looked down upon for being a street martial arts club.

Qin Guan felt amused as he stood at the entrance of the temple.

After visiting the real Shaolin Temple on the Song Mountains, this temple seemed so small that it reminded him of the Earth Temples in the countryside and the temples in Hong Kong movies.

There were two big red lanterns hanging on both sides of the wooden gate. The round windows were perfect copies of the temple made by the Monkey King. Be serious now!

Qin Guan braced himself before he pushed in.

The gate was like a boundary between two different worlds. Qin Guan heard shouts of martial arts practice inside. Four rows of students were practising in the center of the open courtyard.

Despite preparing himself mentally, Qin Guan was still shocked. The master supervising the students noticed the intruder.

# Chapter 658: A Statement From The Benefactor

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"Hello, benefactor. Please accept my courtesy."

"How do you do, master? I called Master Guolin two days ago. I'm Qin Guan."

The young master was taken aback. He seized Qin Guan up from head to toe. A few days ago, his master had shared the exciting news with him.

Qin Guan wanted to talk to them about the promotion of Chinese martial arts. From then on, the Buddhist monks would get very familiar with Qin Guan.

Words are but a gust of wind. Seeing is believing. It makes sense that he is so popular considering his looks.

The monk saluted Qin Guan again. "One minute, please..."

Then he turned around and shouted at his students in an imposing manner, "Good! The first stage is over. Take a 15-minute break. We'll continue practising when I return."

"Yes, master!" The students spoke Chinese with a strange accent.

If one ignored the foreigners, who took up 60% of the total student number, this seemed like an ordinary Chinese martial arts club. Qin Guan followed the vigorous monk.

Behind the courtyard was a library, a hall of 500 Arhats and the dormitories of the monks. The 1,000-square-meter field was reasonably arranged by Guolin according to the traditional Chinese architecture theory of "fitting everything between squares and circles". It was a miniature of the Shaolin Temple back in China.

Before Qin Guan could come to his senses, they had reached Master Guolin's living quarters.



The young monk knocked on the door. A low voice was heard from inside.

"Come in, please."

The monk pushed the door open, took a bow and then retired politely. Qin Guan narrowed his eyes to adjust to the light. Then he saw the person inside the room.

"Benefactor Qin. Come in, please!"

The monk was sitting cross-legged on a futon. He was wearing an ordinary yellow robe and holding an old prayer in his hands.

"Take a seat, please."

Men of faith were always different from ordinary people. Qin Guan thought that the master deserved to be an eminent monk.

Master Guolin looked as calm as a sadhu engaging in Dharma. The ordinary robe looked like an exquisite Kasaya on his body, both solemn and magnificent. People couldn't help but worship him.

"Thank you, Master Guolin. I came here today to discuss the activity we talked about on the phone. I would like to talk about the details."

"My plan is to take advantage of the national party of the police union and unite all the founders of martial arts clubs all over New York to stage a big coup..."

Qin Guan's plan was simple. It would be easy for the superiors of the Shaolin Temple to show the beauty of Chinese martial arts. Master Guolin listened to his detailed plan quietly, only nodding at the best points.

A few minutes later, Qin Guan finished his introduction. When he looked at Master Guolin, he saw a smile on his face.

Suddenly, he relaxed. If the Shaolin School agreed to his plan, the other clubs were sure to say yes.

His task had been fulfilled. Qin Guan had just decided to leave his present and say goodbye, when Master Guolin asked him, "Does your plan mean that you are one of us?"

Qin Guan felt awkward. "A little. I have gotten some lessons from a direct successor of Baguozhang."

"You are so modest. We have to get to know each other before the performance though. May I have the honor of enriching my experience by studying your skills?"

"No problem." Thank god I have been practising these past few days.

"The front yard is big enough. Follow me, please..."

Master Guolin assumed a serious attitude. When they returned to the front yard, all the students stood up to salute him before they scattered to make space for them.

To be honest, the yard was much simpler than Qin Guan's working site, but he felt an unprecedented pressure because of the students and the master's presence.

He didn't want to lose face before the entire American martial arts circle, but all he could do was pray to the heavens that he remembered what Mou Xiaoliu had taught him.

Combat martial arts and performance martial arts were quite different. The audience would be shocked by his acting skills, but any real martial artist would be able to tell that Qin Guan's skills were all style and no substance.

# Chapter 659: Showing Off Before The Experts

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He chose the popular and entertaining Tai Chi. It was his secret weapon for sucking up to old men in New York parks thanks to its unstrained, elegant style.

Qin Guan took off his coat to warm up before he walked to the center of the yard.

There is great beauty between Heaven and Earth,

The spirit of nature lives in human beings...

Even though he was not wearing a loose gown, Qin Guan still seemed to possess a natural grace. He struck a starting pose as silence prevailed around the yard.

Then he slowly began his performance. His every move was smooth and gentle, his actions like floating clouds and flowing water. A living painting of Tai Chi and the Eight Trigrams unfolded before the audience.

Qin Guan's every pause was like a punch, his every tense and relaxed movement round and clear. It was well-known that Chinese punching skills were divided into the Neijia School and the Waijia School. One focused on spirit cultivation, while the other focused on power. Tai Chi was a representative of the Neijia School.

The philosophy of Tai Chi contained both movement and quietude, both speed and slowness. Qin Guan's performance combined the two different powers together. His moves were complete and flexible, the power of his waist making his body a coherent, well-coordinated unit.

All the martial artists present could tell that he was very meticulous. Master Guolin was getting more and more strict, but both performance and combat martial arts were worthy of an

expert's acknowledgement.

When Qin Guan finished his performance, the students applauded.

"Well done!"

"It was a little soft. I prefer a more vigorous performance..."

"Stop daydreaming, dude..."

Martial artists were always straightforward. Qin Guan's ability was acknowledged by Master Guolin though. Qin Guan presented his gifts to Master Guolin and then left in relief, unaware of the riot he had caused.

"Take me to the party, Master!"

"I'm the best student at the temple!"

"I'm the sincerest one! Listen to me, the others always eat meat in secret..."

"I'd rather beat you all up! Then no one will be able to compete with me!"

"Ouch!"

"Ouch!"

They were all punished by the master.

"Amitabha! Your cultivation has not been enough. Squat over here, everyone!"

Meanwhile, Qin Guan drove off, admiring the Chinese infiltration of New York. The most distinctive landmarks of Chinatown were its restaurants and martial arts clubs.

The Chinese parents living far from their motherland sent their kids to martial arts clubs to express their love for China. As a result, the talented masters had taken root in that foreign land.

All kinds of martial arts schools could be found in that area. It was a perfect miniature of the Chinese martial arts circle.

Qin Guan and Xu Xiaoxiao had an appointment at a martial arts club. Only when Qin Guan went out and saw the sun again did he come back to his senses. His experience had been surreal.

He felt like he had travelled back in time a few decades. The masters had been sitting in their chairs in a vigorous manner, while Qin Guan stood in the middle like a criminal in court.

If he hadn't had a tough mind, he would have been scared. Why had they gotten together to meet him? It had seemed like an assembly of the entire New York martial arts circle.

Qin Guan burst into laughter at the thought. He had advocated for the importance of the cooperation between the police and the public, as well as the future development of Chinese martial arts. The earnest masters had believed him.

He had opened a door for them and introduced them to more possibilities. In return, the masters had patted their own chests and made promises to him.

Their valiant spirit had encouraged Xu.

"You are familiar with Chinatown. What did you think of them?" Qin Guan asked him nervously.

Xu was confident. "Don't worry, they have been operating clubs here for many years. What you want from them is very simple. You just need some background actors. They are talented enough and they won't meddle with your work."

Qin Guan relaxed at his words. The national party was coming up soon, so everything had to be ready.

In late December 2003, the important moment finally came. The party would be the last one to be held in the large hall of the New York Police Station.

# Chapter 660: A Splendid Martial Arts Performance

---

That day, some careful New York citizens noticed that many uniformed police officers had gathered in the bustling metropolis. The police representatives, who had come from different directions, could form a splendid parade.

There were policemen on horseback from Texas, who looked as sturdy as bikers, patrols from the Mexico border, and city detectives from Chicago. Compared to them, the small town sergeants were like flowers in a greenhouse. They had experienced unbelievably brutal cases.

Getting a chance to enjoy themselves was rare for them. Before the New Year, they had been sent to another city on the government's expense. They had fallen into a sea of joy and put all gratitude and resentment aside.

As the host, Sergeant Henry was both suffering and having fun. It was a happy day for him until his arch enemy showed up.

"Hi, dude. Long time no see. You are still a boring New Yorker, I see. I wonder what the party will be like..."

It was Sergeant Tommy from Los Angeles, who called himself a fashionable sergeant.

"Ha! It will be better than your party last year, which was full of studs and beauties!" Son of a b\*tch! Henry was not about to show any weakness in his home court.

"But you have to admit that everyone likes that. Come on, everybody! Tell me that you love me!"

Everyone burst into laughter at their quarrel. Those tough guys didn't care about the performance taking place on the stage. They had just gotten together to relax. As high-risk employees, they needed some entertainment during the holidays.

When almost everyone had arrived, Henry took a look at his watch. Qin Guan must be ready!

Suddenly, the sound of cheerful, deafening gongs and drums came from the square behind the police station.

The guests squeezed before the gate together as they heard the passionate music. Some of them pushed the gate open. Everyone was stupefied. The square was like a sea of joy.

There were traditional Chinese lion and dragon dancing teams on the square, as well as a group of martial artists.

A red ball made of silk strips was thrown up into the sky. The actors wearing the lion heads jumped up after the ball. Two lions caught the ball in their mouths and landed on the ground, fighting over it.

Loud cheers encouraged them. "Well done!"

The lions winked naughtily at the audience. Shocked by the scene, the inexperienced police officers winked back in confusion.

The two lions started rolling around on the ground with the ball, making way for everyone else. Their murderous looks overwhelmed the audience.

"Flags up!"

The deafening roar scared the policemen. Some nervous ones instinctively reached for their guns. What are those Asians doing? Do they want to kill us all with one stone? There have been no cases against Asians lately. What are they doing?

As they looked around in horror, countless flags were lifted above the crowd. They were traditional colorful silk banners with small triangle edges and embroidered logos.

The name of each martial arts club was written in block letters on the flags. There were also English translations below.

"Longxing Hall!"

"Juying Hall!"

"Xinxi Hall!"

They seemed to be there for a large assembly. All they needed was a stage.

Carrying their flags, they walked to the building like a sports parade.

"Longxing Hall is here at Master Qin's invitation!"

The flagpole was poked into the ground as the senior master held his fists up to salute the American policemen.

Several officers copied his gesture, hesitantly returning the salutation. Before they could think about it, the next group was up.

"Juying Hall, Tengfei Club and Xinxi Hall are here at Master Qin's invitation!"

They seemed very powerful and vigorous. By contrast, the officers looked weak both in body and spirit. Tommy craned his neck around Henry and asked the local king in a low voice, "Who is Master Qin?"

Master Qin was annoyed. He had told them to come to the hall. They had done as he had said. They were on time, but their way was a little different...

Master Qin squeezed to the entrance awkwardly.



# Chapter 661: A Provoking Performance

---

"Excuse me! I'm sorry..."

"For what?"

"Sorry, I... I'm Master Qin."

Qin Guan successfully attracted everyone's attention and took advantage of it to squeeze through.

"How are you, Master Qin?" He heard a deafening greeting. You scared me!

"Come on! The performance is about to begin. Follow me to the backstage area!"

"Yes, sir!"

They all followed Qin Guan into the hall, walking between the trembling officers. The martial artists didn't want to greet them.

"Thanks!"

"Please!"

When they reached the backstage area, the officers thought that was the end of their shocking performance. As the lion dancing groups on the square were about to retire though, a melodious Buddhist song was heard.

Led by Master Guolin, a group of Shaolin monks and laities walked to the building in a formidable array, surrounded by their believers.

Master Guolin was wearing a cassock. It was Qin Guan's present, made of Yunjin by skilful Chinese craftsmen. The cassock had golden embroidery and jewellery on it. It was a gorgeous, considerate donation from the Shaolin Temple. Master Guolin gave off a solemn, awe-inspiring vibe in it.

All the monks and students from the Shaolin Temple showed up

that day. Their believers watched their parade and followed them mechanically. The music broadcast had been taken care of by the owner of a record store.

The most curious thing was that half the followers of the Shaolin Temple were Americans.

"Amitabha!"

"You should be begging for alms at the reception."

Master Guolin thought highly of Henry. An American guy who knew about alms was hard to come across. He must be a fan of Chinese culture.

"I was invited by Benefactor Qin."

"Oh! Come on in, master. Let me show you the door to the backstage area. Qin Guan is inside."

Henry unconsciously used a deferential language. The group of people took a bow before him.

"Thank you so much..."

Bare heads flashed before their eyes as the blonde Americans mimicked them. When they disappeared from the hall, all the guests exploded.

"What the f\*ck will they do?"

"I'm not young anymore. I could die of a heart attack."

"Are they kidding? Our guns are not toys!"

"Calm down! You don't understand those mysterious Orientals. You should keep an eye on them, my friend."

Annoyed by his peers, Henry waved around helplessly. "Don't worry! There is another door especially for actors. I don't think we'll see any more strangers. Probably..."

Despite his explanation, no one was in the right mood to appreciate the cocktails on the trays. Not all actors were freaks

after all. The officers waited eagerly at the entrance, but it was in vain. The buffet had already opened on the other side.

While people were enjoying the delicious food and splendid performance on the stage, Henry told Qin Guan to begin.

To be a man was to be reliable. The special performance, which had cost Qin Guan a lot of painstaking effort, unfolded on the stage.

While everyone was busy eating the delicious food and chatting merrily, the melodious sound of a flute came from the backstage area. Suddenly, all the lights in the hall went out one after the other. Only a few bright lights above the stage were left on.

The curtain began to rise slowly, revealing a band that played ancient Chinese music. No one recognized the musical instruments on the stage, but they could appreciate their unique style. They gave off a really beautiful, historical vibe.

The pipa player performed a solo.

An awful feeling overwhelmed everyone. They all felt as if they were on a battlefield. The actors walked onto the stage as the music played. No, they did not walk. They jumped.

The martial artists jumped on the stage with somersaults. They looked aggressive and vigorous in their black uniforms as they stood in line and roared together.

"Ha! Hey!"

Their Chinese boxing performance was both orderly and powerful, shocking the tough men under the stage. Are they actors or fighters?

# Chapter 662: Great Admiration

---

Before they could come back to their senses, each of the actors took out a long sword that glittered like frost and rotated them like swordsmen during ancient times.

Clang!

The sound of the swords was so crisp that it made everyone's hair stand on end. When they finished their performance, the actors retired to the edge of the stage, leaving the spotlight to the other performers.

The pipa solo grew quiet as some buddhist music rang out. The atmosphere softened a lot. Tommy wiped some cold sweat off his face carefully. He thought Henry would murder him, but fortunately, there were colleagues all around them.

Suddenly, he got frightened again.

Master Guolin was standing on the stage in a splendid cassock, hitting the heads of two Shaolin Monks with bricks.

"Ah!" the audience cried out before suddenly stopping.

The bricks were crushed into pieces. The two monks, who were safe and sound, flicked the dust off their heads and walked behind a brick wall.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The bricks were smashed to pieces one after the other. Everyone under the stage was shocked, their mouths and eyes opening wide. Some people drank wine to suppress their horror.

They poured the wine into their noses instead of their mouths by accident, spraying the liquid out of their noses.

The monks picked up some spears and stabbed their throats.

The wooden poles bent from the pressure, but the steel spearheads touched their throats without piercing them.

The audience members were not surprised, but they were still horrified. They exchanged a few words nervously in an effort to comfort each other.

"Oh my! What did I just see?"

"Are you trying to warn American policemen about something, Henry? Do you think we have supermen in our country?" That particular person must have read too many Superman comics.

"We should be on alert about Asian criminals. They are beyond the reach of ordinary weapons."

"Yes. I'd rather shoot first and ask questions later!"

One of them, who took their job way too seriously, didn't agree with the rest.

"I think they must be tutors invited here by Henry. That kind of training could improve our skills tremendously so we could capture criminals way more easily in the future. Thank you so much, Henry! Your work is appreciated!"

Henry shot a helpless look at him. The man was fighting a big battle all along the Mexican border, but Henry had had no idea about what a low IQ he had.

His suggestion still sounded practical though. Chinese martial arts could save lives. As Henry was considering the possibility, the Shaolin monks finished their performance and retired backstage, accompanied by the melody of a Chinese zither.

All the lights were pointed at one specific spot. A white round circle of light lay on the center of the stage quietly as two girls in red pushed a large white screen onto the stage. Then Qin Guan, the hero of the night, showed up.

He was wearing white Wushu clothing designed by Yin Changtao, with a decorative design embroidered on it with silver thread. The clustering pine leaves looked like blooming flowers.

The lotus-like buttons on his chest looked very pretty. Of course, such details couldn't satisfy the audience, but the huge brush in Qin Guan's hand, which was as tall as a child, shocked them.

The ink was stored in a blue porcelain cloisonné plate. As the music played, Qin Guan dipped the brush into the ink and began to write.

His every stroke was graceful and elegant. In one minute, he had finished working on the screen.

"Good will prevail and kill tyranny!"

This was not just a Chinese martial arts philosophy, but also a motto of American policemen. Because of their lacking education, the audience members couldn't understand the real meaning of the Chinese characters or the humanity behind the calligraphy. Its beauty still touched their souls though.

Cultivating one's spirit and suppressing one's rage through action and inertia was a basic philosophy of Chinese people. The previous threatening acts were concluded by Qin Guan's performance. The audience was in awe.

Everyone expressed their emotions in the most direct way.

"Well done!"

The audience clapped loudly.

# Chapter 663: Memories of Youth

---

The deafening applause was much louder than the one the pole dancers had received one year ago in Los Angeles.

"That was so cool! I can eat more later!"

"Exactly! This was a show for men!"

I saw you cast a longing look at the girls' legs! Tommy gazed at the man angrily, but didn't argue.

The curtains fell down. When the Broadway dancers got on the stage, Qin Guan clapped along with his friends from the backstage area.

...

There was no such thing as an endless meal. The leftovers on the buffet signalled the end of the splendid party. Henry though, who was a conscientious man, would never abandon his benefactor as soon as he didn't need his help anymore.

He watched the bold Asian guys chat excitedly backstage, hunched over their plates. The police station had offered the actors a free lunch. Qin Guan had specifically asked for takeaway vegetarian meals for the masters of the Shaolin Temple.

Henry had his reasons for staying there. He wanted to understand the Asian men and achieve unity between the police and the public.

Those conservative Asians were wary around the police. They were inclined to stay away from policemen, so some stores run by Asians had become favorites of local criminals.

The policemen also suffered because of the barrier between different languages, cultures and negotiation methods. Their fear of revenge was greater than their financial loss though, so they zipped their mouths shut instead.

That day was an opportunity for both sides to sit down around the same table and deepen their mutual understanding.

Besides, Henry needed their help. He was interested in applying that mysterious Chinese combat art to everyday police work. He planned on combining it with the standard police training, so he wanted to have a discussion with them about a future cooperation. If possible, he wanted to invite them to work as counselors for the New York Police.

Qin Guan was hoping that they would have a successful collaboration in the future. Promoting martial arts culture all over the world was a common dream after all. They all chimed in casually and had a very productive talk.

Qin Guan had finally finished all his tasks for that year. In the cold winter of 2003, he would return home to enjoy the Spring Festival in China. Their family nests were a warm temptation for both Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei.

During that period, China had opened its gates to the world. They didn't need to bring that many gifts with them, so they flew leisurely to the Beijing Airport. Not long afterwards, they flew to Y city, the seaside town where Qin Guan had been born and raised.

The small city still enjoyed a very slow and quiet life.

...

The first thing they had to do was greet their old friends and relatives. Qin Guan was a star now, so his return was breaking news in the small city, where everyone was friends or relatives with everyone else.

It took him about four days to attend all the dinners he had been invited to by different people. Then he was finally able to settle in and relax.

During peaceful times, people were inclined to cherish the memories of their youth. There were not that many important



places in Y city, but some of them were the Nanshan Park, which was perfect for walking outdoors in spring, the Night Fair, and the video game arcade at the Zhenhua Mall.

Each place brought back memories from Qin Guan's school years, when he and his classmates had used to chase each other around on their bikes.

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei decided to revisit their precious memories, starting from their alma mater.

On the first day of 2004, they went out on a bike ride. The cold wind slapped their faces, but there was a warm spring in their hearts as they headed to the 1st Middle School.

They panted as they got closer.

"Wei!"

"Yes?"

"May I voice a request?"

"Sure!"

"Get down! I can't keep riding anymore. Ah! We are going to fall!"

Qin Guan couldn't mount the long slope with Cong Nianwei sitting behind him.

"You failed! You are impossible!"

"Don't say the word 'fail'! I never tried to carry you on the backseat before. Besides, when you think of the dynamics... Blah blah..."

Cong Nianwei realized that Qin Guan was getting more childish as they got closer to their old school.

"Fine, you are right. Just push!"

"Blah blah..."

"Are you done?"

Of course not! They went around the playground before they left. The gatekeeper watched them as if they were thieves. They were not the right age to be attending the school. Plus, one of them was dressed like a bandit, which made them stand out on the school grounds.

The third time the old man walked by them casually, they left as fast as their feet would allow them. Qin Guan forgot to cherish the memory of his favorite dining hall.

Their first stop had been a failure.

# Chapter 664: Old Guys Among Children

---

Riding a bike downhill was much easier than riding it uphill. Qin Guan rushed down to the seaside as Cong Nianwei screamed.

In 10 minutes, they arrived at his former battlefield. It was the 1st Bathing Beach, where he and Cong Nianwei had first gotten together.

White foam was rolling along the waves. The vast sea was close at hand. Even after so many years, the scenery still remained the same.

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei looked at the sea with tears in their eyes. It was the chilly wind that made their eyes water. The cold current that came from Siberia made the beach a snowy paradise.

Their second stop was a failure as well.

"Wei?"

"Stop talking. I'm cold."

"Ha ha... Let's go!"

Cong Nianwei looked at him in surprise, as if she was seeing him for the first time. He looked very determined all of a sudden.

Her heart and face softened with the tender feelings she had for her boyfriend. They had two more stops to make.

"Okay, next!" Cong Nianwei said in her softest voice.

Having a street snack was the safest choice.

The stands on the streets were very convenient, and the food they sold was very satisfying. Even patrons at gourmet restaurants couldn't experience anything close to them.

One could eat and chat with their friends there, or do something to attract the attention of their crush. Even a mere smile could become a cherished memory. Children had some large, reasonably-

priced snacks before returning home with their parents.

Y was a small city, so it only took the young couple 10 minutes to reach the fair. The two most popular fried-meat stands enjoyed the best location. One was on the left, and the other on the right. Every stand in the small city had the same reasonable prices.

Qin Guan stopped before an old kind woman nervously. This was the same stand and dishes that he remembered from his childhood.

"Five portions of chicken, five portions of lamb, mushroom, potatoes and pepper, and two bowls of porridge."

He was still familiar with the menu. The kind woman turned around and got to work.

The meat sizzled in the golden oil as the scent of fried food drifted around the stand.

Unlike the vegetables, which were fried on a steel plate, the chicken and pork were pickled and fried in oil. The woman was very good at her job.

The meat was slowly cooked in the oil. Before taking it out, the old woman coated it with pepper and salt. Her fried meat was famous for its soft texture and thick aroma around the surrounding schools.

Students would ride there on their bikes to have a good meal. The old woman served the meat and filled two bowls with porridge from a large tin tank.

The millet of Y city was not as famous as that of the Shanxi and Shandong provinces, but it was produced in the suburbs and was considered a special treat of the city. It was thick and sticky against the bowl.

The old woman cooked the vegetables fast. Cong Nianwei poured them into her porridge and stirred them with her chopsticks. Their delicious meal was finally complete.

The two of them were enjoying their meat and porridge, when they suddenly heard voices.

"Ten portions of pork, takeaway!"

"Three portions of meat and vegetables! Eat in!"

The students of the surrounding schools had been dismissed. The students in the green-and-white uniforms were from the 10th Middle School, which was the closest to the stand, the kids with the red cheeks were from the local primary school, and the rest were from vocational middle schools.

Ten minutes later, students from two more middle schools started arriving one after another, making even more noise.

Qin Guan's chopsticks hovered in the air. There were not a lot of chairs around. The small stand was crowded. Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei stood out among the energetic students like old Chinese cabbages among tender shoots.

As a result, the curious students turned their attention to them.

# Chapter 665: The Familiar Park

---

Children with runny noses were standing around Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei with their plates.

Are you finished, sir? We want those seats...

Students liked to enjoy benefits and avoid any damages. They usually bullied the weak and yielded to the powerful. They dared not ask any senior students to give up their seats, so they asked help from the most kind-looking people around instead.

Qin Guan was used to public attention from his experience on the T stage, but he had never experienced such embarrassment.

Cong Nianwei buried her head into her bowl and started eating in a hurry. The meat did not taste as delicious anymore. Surrounded by the students, the young couple finished their dinner as fast as they could.

"Can we have the check, please?"

"Come sit here, children!"

The kids nodded at Cong Nianwei with sparkling eyes. "Thank you, Elder Sister."

They are so polite...

The couple went out, exchanging a kind smile. Suddenly, they heard a shocking dialogue behind them.

"There you are, brother! Sit down. I got you a seat!"

"You succeeded today."

"Thanks to your instructions. I found two idiots and tried to act pathetic. They offered their seats to us."

"Well done!"

Cong Nianwei burst into laughter as Qin Guan rolled his sleeves up. How could an award-winning actor be fooled by a child?

Sadly, their third stop had been a failure as well.

Qin Guan's shoulders dropped, but at the thought of their fourth stop, he straightened his back up again.

They headed south along the street and turned left at the crossroads. After a few hundred meters, they reached Nanshan Park, which was their destination that day.

Nanshan Park was the best place for students to spend their spare time in spring. During the holidays, it was often used as a meeting place. The stand at the entrance was selling snacks for kids.

The old man behind the stand was looking for a parking space for his bicycle. It cost 0.1 yuan to park a bike there, but the price of an entry ticket had increased from five yuan to 10. All the scenic spots were included in that price.

Qin Guan braced himself and entered the park hand in hand with Cong Nianwei.

Despite the passage of time, the wooden benches, panda-like trash bins and mountains had remained the same. All the paths led to the entertainment park, the restaurants and the game field. If one was a good player, they could win a prize.

The two of them had not gone there for the games though. They would rather go to the temple during the Spring Festival. Their goal was to relive their happiest memory.

All the kids were familiar with the animals and the zoo. The teachers at school liked to have lessons at the zoo, so that location had become their favorite spot.

Their first stop in the zoo was the Monkey Mountain. All children liked the energetic monkeys. So had Qin Guan. The monkeys used to grab his food from his hand when he was younger, but they had never attacked him.

It was easy to find the Monkey Mountain by following the arrows. That small zoo couldn't be mentioned in the same breath

as the luxurious gardens in big cities.

Monkeys were a must for all zoos though, no matter how large or small. They were very tough and easy to feed. As a matter of fact, there was a large group of monkeys in that zoo.

Of course, they couldn't live in a fake forest, so they had to be locked in a large cage.

Qin Guan loved them. As long as he had some food in his hands, they would not be hostile. Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei began strolling around the empty zoo.



# Chapter 666: The Riot On The Monkey Mountain

---

Some smart pedlars were touting not far away. There was an official notice warning about feeding the animals in the area.

Qin Guan shamelessly bought some bananas and popcorn for the monkeys. I should get some supplies before I head to war.

Armed with his supplies, Qin Guan walked to the first cage. After taking a look inside, he unconsciously turned back to the pedlar. The old man had escaped with his goods as fast as his feet would carry him.

Cong Nianwei burst into laughter. The clever monkeys wouldn't stay outside and suffer through the cold. Instead, they found shelter in the warm feeding room.

As a result, all Qin Guan could see was some feces on the ground, a clear sign of the existence of the monkeys.

Qin Guan got annoyed by Cong Nianwei's smile. Anxious to give the snacks away, the two of them checked all the cages one by one.

There were no macaques, no long-tail monkeys, no baboons... There it was! Qin Guan burst into tears when he spotted the baboon inside the cage. His trip had not been in vain after all.

After taking a closer look, he hesitated. It's so big...

Of course it was! It had to survive in the African grasslands!

Qin Guan sized up the animal and relaxed. It was an old baboon with very thin hair. The animal was dozing off in the sunshine, looking kind and harmless.

Qin Guan looked around and then knocked against the cage bars with the banana.

The baboon opened its eyes and shot a look at him.

Humans are so annoying! They bother us even in the winter! Huh? Is that a banana? But that guy looks so ugly... Forget it. Visitors are rare here these days!

The baboon got up with a yawn and walked over to Qin Guan. Qin Guan turned around excitedly to show Cong Nianwei.

"It's coming! Do you want to feed it yourself?"

Cong Nianwei looked scared.

"Be careful!"

"What?"

"Ah!"

Qin Guan turned back in surprise. Five hairy claws had reached for the banana simultaneously. His miserable animal-provoking skills had worked. The baboons inside the cage had rushed over.

Those animals had no manners. They fought over food, mating, and who would sit on the throne every day. In two seconds, the banana had been seized from Qin Guan's hands.

Qin Guan took out another one. Soon, it was gone as well.

The old baboon he had tried to feed was waiting behind the others. When the younger ones rolled over, fighting over the banana, it walked up to Qin Guan slowly.

A calm claw reached out between the bars. Judging by its experience with humans, this was its best chance of having some food all to itself. This method had been successful many times before.

The human and the monkey looked at each other with emotion. Qin Guan grimaced and showed the baboon the empty plastic bag.

"There are no more bananas. Take this."

The old baboon grabbed a single popcorn in its claw. It looked down at it and then back up again.

"Are you kidding me, bastard?"

Animals liked to express their feelings straightforwardly.

The baboon revealed its true nature as a fighter by throwing the popcorn away and baring its sharp fangs at Qin Guan. As an omnivorous animal, it was good at tearing flesh apart. Scared, Qin Guan backed into Cong Nianwei awkwardly.

"Why is that monkey so angry?"

Before his voice could fade away, all the baboons got just as angry as the old baboon and shook the bars hard to vent their rage.

"Qin Guan, the old baboon must be their king!"

"Impossible! It's not strong enough!"

"There must be different laws in the zoo. They must look up to the older, shrewder monkeys."

"What shall we do then?"

"Run!"

The two of them ran away without looking back. The zookeeper had been busy during the commotion. Those annoying visitors always caused him trouble.

"Hey! Stop, you two! You have to pay a fine! Feeding the animals is not allowed in the zoo!"

# Chapter 667: Getting Used To Having You Around

---

The zookeeper tried to catch up with Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei, but failed. The baboons booed at him in dissatisfaction.

Depressed, Qin Guan followed Cong Nianwei out of the park.

Their fourth stop had been a failure as well.

...

Cong Nianwei looked back at her boyfriend. Fantasies were beautiful, but reality was cruel. He had given more thought to their youthful memories.

Cong Nianwei stretched her hand toward the popcorn box. Qin Guan was taken aback.

"It's sweet, but cold."

She was right. Their love was warm enough for them. Qin Guan smiled behind his thick scarf.

"Qin Guan?"

"Yes?"

"Win a doll for me. Over there! At the balloon stand!"

"No problem!"

At the exit of the park was a group of peddlers. Their turf was marked by some plain prizes.

Qin Guan lifted the gun, which had a simple wooden butt, and used both his childhood memories and what he had learned during his military training.

Bang! Bang!

The colorful balloons burst at the sound. Every shot was executed perfectly. The stand owner was annoyed. If all customers were that

good at shooting, he would go bankrupt.

Qin Guan could choose any prize he wanted, but Cong Nianwei pointed at a lovely bear.

"I want that one!"

The stand owner rushed to take the bear down. He was scared. He had originally thought that the girl would choose the remote-controlled car, but she had picked the ugly bear instead.

He handed Cong Nianwei the bear, flicking the dust off its fur considerately.

"Here you go. Thank you for playing!"

The bear filled Cong Nianwei's embrace, its legs swaying over her feet. Qin Guan tucked the bear under his arm and pulled Cong Nianwei out of the park.

"It's a bit rough, but it's lovely."

"No, it's ugly. Didn't I bring you a teddy bear from the UK? You always spend time at the gallery. I didn't think you would like such a bear."

Cong Nianwei took the bear to allow Qin Guan to start his bike.

"I've gotten used to sleeping next to you. I feel alone without you at home."

Qin Guan paused and shot a surprised, incredulous look at his girlfriend. The proud, calm girl was not usually this shy.

Suddenly, Qin Guan took off his scarf and kissed her on the lips. They expressed their love shamelessly before the surrounding peddlers and students.

The handsome man and the pretty girl were very attractive. The passersby all started whispering to each other.

"That young man is so handsome!"

"He looks like the famous Qin Guan!"

"But he must be in America right now. There have been no news about him returning to China."

"But he looks so much like him..."

Qin Guan realized he had acted carelessly. He and Cong Nianwei spoke through their eyes.

Qin Guan: What shall we do?

Cong Nianwei: Just stay calm and deny any connection. They can't confirm it any other way.

Qin Guan: Then what?

Cong Nianwei: Let's just leave as soon as possible.

Qin Guan: Good idea!

They ran to the bike calmly under the curious gazes of the crowd, when suddenly a roar exposed them.

Y was a small city, so one came across acquaintances everywhere. Zhou Jin, who lived close to the park, noticed Qin Guan as he was taking out the garbage.

"Qin Guan! You are back!" Zhou Jin shouted, running over to them excitedly. "Hey! Stop! I'm not a ghost! Are you acting like you don't know me just because you are famous? Hey!"

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei got worried. All the spectators' eyes lit up as the couple got ready to run away.

Qin Guan mounted the bike and nodded at Cong Nianwei. "Get on!" Cong Nianwei rushed to the running bike and leapt on it with the bear in her arms.

# Chapter 668: Climbing Over A Wall

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The cute bear was sandwiched between them, its large head hanging off Qin Guan's shoulder helplessly.

Qin Guan fled as Zhou Jing chased after them in his slippers.

What he had been worried about had come true. Young people began to run after him like wolves.

"It's Qin Guan!"

"I was right!"

"It's the star of our city! Catch him!"

"Go! Go!"

Zhou Jing was knocked down by the crowd. When he came back to his senses and stood up again, everything was a mess. He realized he had unintentionally harmed his friend.

After looking around for a bit, he threw the garbage into the trash can and returned home with his hands behind his back.

It was not my fault, Qin Guan. You should have let me know in advance. People in love tend to die young...

Zhou Jing forgave himself as his friend ran away.

"Qin Guan! Stop! We are not animals!"

"Qin Guan, I just want to kiss you! No, hug you... No, touch you..."

Qin Guan was riding away with all his strength.

"Hurry, hurry!"

Cong Nianwei had experienced the might of his crazy fans before. They were following the bike like an army on a march. Some young men even tried to intercept them. It felt like they were being surrounded by zombies.

"There's a slope over there!"

"Nonsense! It will only slow us down!"

"We'll go downhill, you idiot!"

"Got it!"

As Qin Guan took a sharp turn, sparkles flew between the wheels and the ground. The two of them headed down the long slope.

The head of the bear had completely covered Cong Nianwei's face, so she had to close her eyes and bury her face into its fur. The fans slowed down. They knew that the bike would get away after the slope.

A few old men were chatting by the entrance of the alley.

"What are they doing? Are they chasing a thief?"

"No idea. It can't be a thief though. No thief would run into a dead end."

"You are right!"

The sad crowd suddenly cheered up. "Yes!" They all sped up towards the alley.

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei, who had reached the end of the alley, got off the bike and looked at the short wall innocently.

"A dead end?"

"I'm not familiar with the area..."

Before they could figure out a plan, they heard voices.

"Do you see the dead end?"

"No, it's a long alley. Could Qin Guan have entered one of the houses?"

"Impossible! I don't see his bicycle around."

They sounded like Sherlock Holmes.

Unwilling to surrender, Qin Guan made a decision.



"Climb over the wall, Wei!"

Back at school, Qin Guan had been good at climbing walls. He and some other boys would climb over the wall of their school to skip class.

He put his idea into practice at once, squatting down so Cong Nianwei could step on his back.

"Hurry up! Use my neck!" Cong Nianwei put the bear on her head and mounted his neck.

"Go!"

This was one of the advantages of being tall. Cong Nianwei reached the top of the wall. Fortunately, there were no pieces of glass or nails on it, so she jumped.

"You go first. Let me be!"

Cong Nianwei calmly swung her other leg over and sat on the wall. By that time, the first fans had craned their necks around the corner. Qin Guan threw the bike over the wall with effort and took a few steps back without hesitation.

Then he ran forward and used his hands to reach the top of the wall, channelling all his strength to his arms. At least that was what his fans saw him do.

# Chapter 669: A Traditional Spring Festival

---

Qin Guan's long legs stretched out beneath his grey windcoat. His well-built back looked very alluring as crystal beads of sweat appeared on his smooth forehead.

His agile jump looked like a standard gymnastics exercise as he climbed over the wall. When he landed on the ground on the other side of the wall, Qin Guan opened his arms for Cong Nianwei.

"Jump, Wei!"

Cong Nianwei jumped off without hesitation with a naughty smile. She was excited to get out of line for once. The two of them suddenly heard a roar from the other side.

"Did Qin Guan climb over the wall?"

"Yes, I saw him! It looked bloody awesome!"

"Come on! Follow him!"

Qin Guan jumped on his bike. Fortunately, it was still intact.

"The bear!"

Cong Nianwei pulled the bear down from the wall. The people on the other side saw its short legs disappear off the top of the wall. They climbed up, only to see the couple ride away in the distance.

Bang!

A boy jumped off and then raised his arms at the crowd in disappointment.

"They are gone!" the others cried out angrily.

The bike rushed out of the alley and joined the traffic on South Avenue. They had finally escaped successfully.

The stars were sparkling in the sky, as all the clouds had hidden away in the cold winter night.

The scattered sounds of fireworks announced the arrival of the

Spring Festival.

Let's celebrate the Spring Festival! Let's celebrate the Spring Festival!

During the Spring Festival, people always complained about being bored. They had no idea how to spend the long holiday. They always sneered at the old-fashioned Spring Festival Gala, but they still looked forward to the gala chimes at midnight.

Peanuts, sunflower seeds, fruit drops... New Year phone calls, kowtowing, unexpected money...

Qin Guan's phone was silent. No one knew that he had returned to China except for the people that were close to him. Qin Guan was eating sunflower seeds as he waited for Zhou Jing and Li Jian, when he suddenly received a call from Xue Wanyi.

"Hello, Sister Xue. I think we have already exchanged a New Year's call."

"We have work to do. I got a call from Huayi yesterday. They want to offer you a film role."

"I'm busy enjoying the Spring Festival."

"It's after the Lantern Festival. I read the script and thought it was really good. I'll say yes for you."

"You are breaking the rules, sister."

"Qu is of the same opinion. I just sent the script to Cong Nianwei's email. Wait for the shooting schedule, okay?"

You got my girlfriend involved?

Qin Guan got a message from Cong Nianwei on his phone. The script is not bad. I sent it to your email address.

Sister Xue was right. But so what? His priority was to enjoy the holiday with his friends.

Qin Guan threw the phone onto the couch impatiently. Maybe I

could take a look at the script first... I have nothing to do now anyway.

Qin Guan turned on his laptop and checked his email for the script.

It was titled "Perhaps, Love." What the hell is it about? Does it revolve around an aggressive CEO or a wild concubine?

As Qin Guan read it nervously, he became stricter. When he reached the end of the script, he called Sister Xue back.

"Which role is mine, Sister Xue?"

"The love interest, of course. The producer saved the role for you. If you turn it down, they'll offer it to Jincheng Wu..."

"I'll do it, but after the Lantern Festival."

"No problem. So, shall I pass on your response?"

"Okay. I'll be waiting for the schedule."

Qin Guan hung up, smiling to himself. This was the second time he was seizing an opportunity from Jincheng Wu. Sorry, but we are competitors!

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door.

"Qin Guan! Open the door! We are here!"

He saw smiles form on the fat and thin faces outside the door. His friends had been working, but their hugs remained just as tight.

"Hey! Let me go! I can't breathe!"

He would be the first man to get smothered against another man's chest.

"You should lose some weight, Li Jian. I mean it!"

Qin Guan broke away from his embrace and started putting on his clothes. "Let's go! Where are we going today? Is it still a secret?"

Qin Guan had no idea about their destination for the Spring

Festival. He only realized what their general direction was when they got into Li Jian's new Santana.

They drove along South Avenue, heading west. There were only plants and vegetable fields in that direction. Where were they going?

# Chapter 670: Good Wang Xiaoya

---

Qin Guan was pulled into a small valley. When they rounded the next corner, he saw an altogether different world. There were large yards with logos of different companies all over the place. After going past a few yards, they finally reached their destination.

The Jing Jian Law Firm had to be his friends' masterpiece.

Qin Guan couldn't help but admire the two of them. They had found a good location in the city with a square yard and a door that opened to the public. They went through the yard to reach the meeting room and the office.

The design of the yard was wonderful. It was not as cold and strict as most law firm offices. It actually looked very carefree. There were tall bamboo shelves with gourd vines climbing all over them and some small calabashes trying their best to hide under the leaves.

When Qin Guan entered the room, he saw a familiar face.

"Wei? You are here too? Why didn't you call me?"

Cong Nianwei shot a confused look at Zhou Jing. "They didn't tell you? Didn't I mention it?"

She handed him a cup of tea.

"I designed their offices in America. I thought you knew. Didn't Sister Xue tell you that Zhou and Li needed your help? Did they want to surprise you?"

What are you talking about? Sister Xue only told me about the script.

Meanwhile, Sister Xue hung up and took a bite of the tomato on a stick in Yin Changtao's hands. The two of them were in the Chaoyang Temple Fair in Beijing.

Yin, who was American Chinese, had never been to the Spring

Festival in China, so everything there was new to him. "Why didn't you tell Qin Guan?" he asked Sister Xue, who was enjoying her candy.

"It's not an official job. They just want me to watch over the procedure. They are lawyers after all. They do everything by the book, even if they are working with friends. Besides, this is just casual work, it's not business."

Yin was not very cunning. "Then help will not be offered to the public, right?"

"Probably not."

"Ha ha..."

It was too late for regrets now. They would not stress over cheating their friends.

Meanwhile, Qin Guan took a sip of tea in confusion. "What can I help you with? I know nothing about the law."

The two men smiled at him, which made Qin Guan nervous. Zhou Jing rubbed his hands together. "Do you remember my niece?"

"Yes. Her name is Xiaoya. She's a plump little girl."

"She would like to see you and have some ice-cream with you."

"What happened to her?"

"She participated in a dance competition. Her school won the first prize. After the Spring Festival gala, our TV station will organize a party for the Lantern Festival. All actors and performers will come from the cultural museum, the drama group and other public institutions. Wang Xiaoya was assigned to be a dancer at the gala."

"The children are really serious about this, but some older actors have had some conflicts with them. The rehearsal has been paused countless times. They have been preparing really hard for the gala,

yet they haven't even been able to get on the stage."

"Wang Xiaoya was really angry. Children always tell the truth, so she told everyone that her Uncle Qin is famous all over the world, but he is still humble and honest."

"She betrayed your identity before her dance instructor and the director... They now know that she knows an international star!"

Wang Xiaoya, who was a proud girl, had held her head high and said, "I'm not lying! Uncle Qin has come home for the Spring Festival. My uncle is his best friend. They used to play together when they were kids!"

The director had called his supervisor, who was the chairman of the TV station, in tears. He had a hunch that the Lantern Festival of Y city wouldn't be outshadowed by the splendid parties of other local TV stations in the Shandong Province again.

Maybe their party would even win an award for making a contribution to the civilization and construction of the city. The chairman made a wise decision.

"We must get Qin Guan to our TV station. He must enjoy the festival with everyone else. He is a resident of Y city after all. Whatever we do, we have to achieve that goal!"



# Chapter 671: Can You?

---

The director had nodded again and again as he spoke on the phone. The instructions he got had made his eyes glitter.

"I'm reminding you that you can find a way to convince the girl..."

Directors were always far-sighted. After several failures to convince Qin Guan, the director had decided to approach Wang Xiaoya.

The girl had promised that she would get him to come. It seemed like she would make a good matchmaker in the future.

That was why Zhou and Li had taken Qin Guan there. Their real destination was a shooting site not far away.

When he realized where they were going, Qin Guan was stupefied.

"Do you mean the exact place where the choir used to practise at primary school?"

"Exactly!"

He suddenly remembered a time when he and his friends would put flour and rouge on their faces and wear white shirts and blue pants.

"That small auditorium has remained the same?"

"Yes! Even the small hole on the floor is still there!"

Qin Guan stood up suddenly and asked, "Only one show? Is it a live one?"

"It's a recorded broadcast. We hope that's convenient for you... You know the local gala is pretty plain..."

Before Zhou could finish, he was interrupted by his friend. "What are we waiting for? Let's go! I've missed those uncomfortable

folding chairs!"

Ten years before, the auditorium seats had been some wooden chairs that felt cold against one's bottom in the winter.

They all followed Qin Guan to the hall. Zhou was the last one out, so he locked the door with a smile. He is the same guy he was back then. He is still just as kind and sensitive.

After going through the scratched wooden gate, they reached the small hall of their memories. The actors, the director, the host and the gatekeeper were standing by the entrance, craning their necks around to peer at them.

As soon as they recognized Qin Guan, the director rushed over to them.

"Thank you so much for your support of the culture of Y city, comrade!" Qin Guan shook hands with him speechlessly. Actually, he had gone there just to reminisce. Suddenly, Wang Xiaoya squeezed through the crowd and rushed up to her handsome uncle.

"Uncle Qin Guan!"

"Xiaoya!"

Qin Guan hugged the little girl and lifted her up.

"See?" Li Jian whispered to Cong Nianwei. "He is ready to be a father. He is very familiar with holding children. You have been lovers for a long time. Just get married already!"

Cong Nianwei raised an eyebrow at him like a strict middle school monitor. Li shivered and moved away from her.

Qin Guan walked into the hall, surrounded by everyone.

"Our gala is a recorded broadcast, so each part can be shot multiple times. The best parts will be broadcast to the audience for entertainment purposes. We were really bold to invite you here. Our budget might be limited, but we can at least cover your cab fare..."

The director explained the situation with a plain accent. He was really afraid of offending Qin Guan, but Qin Guan felt warmth in his heart. He was deeply moved.

He is an honest man. As a citizen of Y city, I feel really optimistic!  
Qin Guan put Xiaoya down and got to work.

"So which part should I take over, director?"

"Anything you like. Don't be shy. You could even recite poetry."

Qin Guan's advantage was his looks. His pretty face allowed him to do anything he wanted.

While Qin Guan was talking with the director, Wang Xiaoya was showing off.

"I'm not boasting! Uncle Qin is really coming!"

"We don't care. All he can do is sing or dance. He has nothing to do with our rehearsal. He is not some kind of god. A fashionable young man like him does not have the experience old men like us do."

The two men had sided against the little girl.

What a joke! A young man could never understand traditional folk opera!

Wang Xiaoya defended her Uncle Qin.

"Nonsense! My uncle is good at operas! He can do anything!"

What big talk!

The two old men turned their eyes to Qin Guan.

"Operas focus on heritage. What Wang Xiaoya is saying makes sense. Every year we argue over the performance, but this year we would like to retire and surrender the stage to our rising star. This will be a new era for folk opera."

"I agree with Lao Zheng. We should bid farewell to the old ways and welcome a new beginning!"

# Chapter 672: Lv Opera

---

The two immodest actors, who happened to share the same opinion, passed the buck to Qin Guan. The director went pale, but Qin Guan smiled.

He was familiar with Lv Opera.

Lv Opera, which was also called Yang-Chin with makeup and Chin Opera, was one of the eight most famous Chinese operas and a very popular opera in the Shandong Province.

The actors spoke with a local accent, so the elderly loved it. Compared to Peking Opera, Lv Opera was much closer to life. Everyone in the Shandong Province could understand the lines easily.

Qin Guan's knowledge of Lv Opera had not come from Teacher Rong. Although she was a history professor, she couldn't understand the Shandong dialect. He had actually learned everything from his grandpa, an old man who knew a lot about folk art.

His grandpa had always liked immediate pleasures, so his own grandfather, who had been a strict man, hadn't liked him very much.

Qin Guan's grandpa led a cozy life with plenty of hobbies. When Qin Guan would stay with him during summer vacation, they would play a different game every day. They would never play the same game a second time.

Qin Guan had learned about Lv Opera from him. When he had been a child, his grandpa had set him down in his lap and waited for the opera to begin with a dish of sunflower seeds and a pot of tea next to him.

The original music, plain makeup and bright costumes had been imprinted in Qin Guan's memory. The two old men had just

reminded him of them.

"Lv Opera? No problem!"

Everyone was shocked, except Wang Xiaoya, who shouted confidently, "Yeah! I told you Uncle Qin could do anything!"

Qin Guan's friends in the auditorium fell silent. What the hell is Lv Opera?

They had no idea, even though they were natives. Qin Guan took off his coat happily. "Where is the dressing room? Is there a professional stylist?"

The two older actors shot a supercilious look at him. "This group tours the countryside. Of course there's no stylist! The actors have to be self-sufficient. The older generation could always do its own makeup!"

Qin Guan was happy to hear that. "No problem. Today I'll show everyone what I can do!"

Then he walked to the backstage area slowly, leaving the two old men to look at each other in shock. Will he perform a Lv Opera?

There were not that many people backstage, so Qin Guan picked a vanity with a mirror.

Modern cosmetics were easier to use than traditional ones. Qin Guan applied Vaseline and liquid foundation to his face, and then brushed some blush on his cheeks and drew black lines around his eyes.

When the prop masters rushed to the backstage area, Qin Guan had already finished his eyebrows and eye makeup and was rummaging through an old case.

He was looking for a tool used for touching up makeup during the break.

Water was flowing in his eyes. His face looked like white jade, and his red lips were as bright as roses. No words could express his

elegance.

Decades ago, a [Xiaosheng](#) with Qin Guan's face could attract rich women from all over the country. The crew members around Qin Guan felt secretly grateful for the monogamous rules of New China.

When Qin Guan finished his makeup, he started to put on his costume.

"I have decided what I will do, Master Zheng. I will perform 'Watching Lanterns', the five-minute Xiaosheng solo. It's perfect for a TV broadcast."

Everyone, including the cast and crew of other acts, took a seat under the stage. They were curious about what the superstar would do. The director confirmed that all six cameras were in place before he gestured at Qin Guan.

Lv Opera was called Chin Opera for a reason. Its background music was composed only by chin and pipa.

After one minute of background music, Qin Guan walked on the stage at a lively pace.

Yes, lively. Very lively, indeed. Lv Opera was very close to life.

Qin Guan was wearing white leg wrappings and black cloth shoes, which looked very different from the thick-soled Peking Opera boots. He was even able to take a few leaps.

Young men in Chinese operas.

# Chapter 673: A Wonderful Opera

---

Qin Guan threw his sleeves out and then took them back in his hands. Cong Nianwei thought he gave off a countryside vibe, but she had gotten used to his god-like presence on the stage.

Qin Guan was wearing a short robe, a pair of pants, and a square hat with bobbles. He opened his mouth and let out a clear, deep voice.

"I strode over to the Lantern Hall..."

His words were simple, and he spoke with an original Shandong Province dialect. He delivered his lines clearly, making it easy for everyone to understand.

"The cabbage lantern has curved leaves. The Chinese parsley lantern is a mess. The celery lantern looks like a steel saw. The spinach lantern looks like a bunch of swords."

Qin Guan was busy gesturing. There were too many things to show everyone.

This was the first time most of the young audience members were watching Lv Opera, but they could all hear the lines clearly. Qin Guan's funny performance amused them. His act was a folk tale that was very close to life. Everyone's hearts warmed up as they heard his song.

"Garlic plants have thick roots and they are as thin as bolts. Spring onions are as straight as spears."

Qin Guan pointed in the air. "Chilli peppers are really pointed..."

Peking Opera and Kun Opera did not feature such lines, but Lv Opera was famous for its simple words and unique Shandong accent. The two masters forgot their conflict and shook their heads along with Qin Guan's movements.

The director was both happy and annoyed. He was happy with

Qin Guan's performance. The award-winning actor was devoted to the opera. The director's mouth was wide open, and his eyes looked like crescent moons. Everyone felt like smiling.

The makeup annoyed him though. F\*ck! Everyone looked the same with makeup on. The audience would not recognize Qin Guan. They would have to use subtitles, or the TV audience would have no idea who the guy with the authentic Shandong accent was. He had won two acting awards in Europe after all!

Qin Guan finished the classic scene in five minutes, singing, speaking, acting and performing acrobatics at a high speed. He hardly even took a breath. The audience had to struggle to keep up with him. In the end, he raised his voice and took a solemn, respectful pose, ending the scene smoothly.

"We enjoyed a good harvest in the Shandong Province. Let peace reign over the land..."

Qin Guan held his arms up and kept that pose for a while. The two old men were the first to come back to their senses. Tears were running down their cheeks. Qin Guan was certainly qualified to perform Lv Opera on CCTV.

Everyone applauded with all their strength, reminding the stunned director that Qin Guan was finished.

A thunderous applause filled the hall. Although Wang Xiaoya knew nothing about opera, she mimicked her uncle and applauded for handsome Uncle Qin.

Qin Guan retired to the backstage area. Even a few minutes on the stage required a decade of training. The opera was gradually fading away from young people's memories. The inheritance of Chinese operas shouldered a heavy responsibility.

Qin Guan couldn't express his mixed feelings. A copy of his performance was kept by the TV station.

The gala was broadcast during the Lantern Festival. After



enjoying the real lantern assembly, the audience tuned in to watch the local gala.

The host and the participants remained the same, but they had heard that their favorite award-winning actor would perform during the gala.

As a result, the people who visited the lanterns were less than usual. This indicated the importance they attached to the gala. After a long introduction from the host, the audience finally saw the performer they were so obsessed with.

"What the hell is that?"

Everyone was shocked by the opera. Their first response was to watch Qin Guan's character sing. They all found some interesting points in the opera.

The lines were simple, interesting and easy to understand. The audience was so happy about this that they started talking about the performance online. Even though this was a family moment, a thread silently appeared on the Haijiao forum. Soon, it reached the top of the page.

"Qin Guan is performing at the Lantern gala of Y city. As a local resident, I feel really happy."

The post was like a drop of water in boiling oil.

"Liar! He can't be in China!"

"He returned to China in October."

"Show me a picture. I won't believe you, unless you have proof!"

When similar queries starting coming from all directions, the author of the post responded again.

# Chapter 674: An Invitation From Hong Kong

---

He didn't argue with the others. Instead, he uploaded a series of videos on the website. In the videos, which had been shot with a cell phone, Qin Guan was performing on TV.

After one minute of silence, another riot broke out.

"Are you kidding me? These vague videos are your evidence? I can even hear children crying in the background!"

The user felt awkward. This was a common occurrence when people were watching TV at home. As the other users were talking about the videos, someone suddenly told them, "Qin Guan's blog has been updated!"

"Ha! You have been proven wrong! Just wait for my evidence!" the user said before he left. The others waited for his evidence silently. In a few minutes, the guy returned with some striking news.

"F\*ck! He has returned to China. He is really in Y city!"

Qin Guan's team had gotten a copy of his performance and updated the blog while the gala was still being broadcast. Chinatown had a large population after all. Chinese fans in other countries were waiting to watch Qin Guan's performance. They couldn't understand it, but they still admired Qin Guan.

Some crazy fans began to gather troops of friends to help them trace Qin Guan's whereabouts during the rest of the holiday. As a result, people overseas learned about Qin Guan's hometown and the folk music of Lv Opera.

By the time Y city welcomed a group of strange visitors in the winter, which was an off-season for tourism, Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei had already left for Hong Kong.

This was the first time Cong Nianwei was going to Hong Kong. After visiting its famous buildings and tasting the delicious local

food, she would return to New York alone.

Qin Guan followed a crew member to the studio. Everyone was busy working. Chen Kexin, the director and producer, was talking with the executive producer about some early production preparations.

"I found some figurants from the Shanghai Song and Dance Troupe. They are all professional dancers. I also selected some actors from my own company for some minor roles."

"I heard that Qin Guan's participation shook the billionaire circle in Hong Kong."

Chen Kexin leaned against the back of the couch helplessly. He took off his symbolic black frames and rubbed his sore eyes.

"Not just the Hong Kong billionaires, but the Columbia Company in America as well. It's said that Paramount got its hands on our script somehow and studied it carefully."

The executive producer looked encouraged. "That's good news! Why are you so worried?"

"The feedback was not what we expected, despite Qin Guan's participation. They said that they would suffer a loss if the musical was released in America. They could only count on indie film fans. The film's oriental background and romance are incompatible with American people's taste. On the other side, the Venice Film Festival showed some interest in the film. If we finish it in 2004, we could take part in the festival in 2005."

The producer was taken aback. "Qin Guan has won two acting awards. Why did they only contact Venice?"

Chen looked around before he disclosed the information in a low voice that only the producer could hear.

"It's a decision made by the senior executives. It's a great pressure on you and me. They want Qin Guan to make a grand slam with this film. That's why I am so nervous. I feel like I'm walking on

thin ice, despite all the resources I have. I have to count each tiny link with painstaking effort."

The producer held his breath. This meant that the company had spent a lot on the film. Director Chen had to...

Mercy couldn't solve everything. They had to do their best. He was still confused about some things though. Pointing to a few roles, he asked, "What will they do in the film? They have no lines, so their parts don't require any acting skills. Why are they reserved?"

He had a point. Chen burst into angry laughter.

"They got themselves into trouble! I chose Jincheng Wu at first, but nobody agreed with me. They tried their best to get Qin Guan, and then they leaked the news! They have already spread rumors among the billionaire circle!"

"Qin Guan is a gifted student from Columbia University. He used to be a model in China and he won some important awards in Europe. He's the perfect man! He started from nothing and made a fortune. Everyone can see themselves in him. In other words, they feel a sense of substitution with him."

"Plus, all those rich women want to meet him in person. If we weren't capable enough, we wouldn't have been able to carry on with the shooting with so much stuff going on around us."

# Chapter 675: Three Roles On Auction

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The executive producer didn't know what to say. "So what?"

"After negotiating with the company, the roles will be auctioned off online to Chinese people from all over the world."

"What the f\*ck..."

The executive producer jumped up from the couch. His cup fell down on Chen's knees, spilling hot water and tea leaves. He didn't pay attention to the cup though. He just cried out, "What a good way to make money! You should have told me earlier!"

Chen was extremely annoyed with him.

"Piss off! The auction began earlier. The deadline expires today."

Chen shot a supercilious look at the guy screaming on the couch and buried his head in his hands. He had good reason to be depressed. He had just turned down an important activity.

I'd better wait for Qin Guan outside. He will check in with us today.

It was a lucky day for the people waiting for the auction, who were all watching the timer on the screen. They had all heard and shared the news thanks to their friends within the circle. The Chinese billionaires were watching on the secret website. They came from Hong Kong, Malaysia, Taiwan, Singapore... Even from Vietnam and Thailand.

They were clear about the details of each role, as well as the auction regulations. The highest bidder would win.

The currency of the internet auction was the American dollar, so all offers were converted to dollars by the platform, according to the instant ratio.

The first role was a waitress who would serve Qin Guan. The second one was a rich woman who would go to the feast with Zhou

Xue. The last one was a member of the film crew. The first and last one could also be played by men.

The fierce competition surprised the technicians of the website. Fortunately, the crew had abundant financial support and the website was used exclusively by rich people. Otherwise, it would have collapsed due to the large amount of registrations and the continuous bids.

It was all Qin Guan's fault. The bidders were all familiar with the handsome model from the fashion weeks, jewellery auctions and luxury product ads, so they were eager to see him in person and confirm the existence of such extreme beauty.

Thus, they all spent their gold without hesitation.

The first role had attracted everyone's attention, so its value kept increasing. The starting price had been one dollar, but 10 minutes before the auction ended, it had reached 58,888 dollars.

Of course, those old rich guys wouldn't act in the film personally. They all had a group of sobbing daughters or concubines who wanted the part, so the billionaires would just visit the set as relatives.

Tick tock, tick tock... When the final moment came, the role's value went up like crazy.

Crack!

Time was up. The button dimmed right on time. The slow bidders couldn't press it down anymore. The final price was 88,888.

Superstitious Chinese rich men loved that number too much. The most attractive role had just been cast.

In a luxurious house in Hong Kong, a pretty girl with long hair hugged her bearded father and kissed him on the cheek. Qin Guan, I'm coming!

Meanwhile, a young man threw his computer mouse away. F\*ck!

The rising storm under the deep waters of the Hong Kong entertainment circle was beyond Qin Guan's reach. He had just arrived on set and joined forces with Sister Xue. His team, which included his stylist, assistants, secretary and professional manager, appeared before the Hong Kong film makers in a formidable array. There were more than 20 people in total.

Actually, if they had been in any other country, Sister Xue wouldn't have presented such a large army. This was Hong Kong though. There were capable people everywhere. Most people looked down upon actors from the Chinese mainland, not realizing that Hong Kong films were going downhill.

As an experienced agent, Sister Xue knew this all too well. Although Qin Guan had gone there at their invitation, he still had to have a large number of soldiers with him. Otherwise, he would suffer.

Qin Guan looked at the four strong men standing behind him. They were wearing black suits and they all had the same buff figure and murderous expression.

Qin Guan craned his neck towards Sister Xue. "Are they our bodyguards? Where did you get them?"

"Before I left Beijing. Guan Jian got them for you as a gift."

Qin Guan was stunned. "Even dragons could not scare these men," Sister Xue whispered to him. "They came to Hong Kong from the mainland and became influential here. At least you would be able to escape safely though."

Qin Guan knew nothing about the Hong Kong entertainment circle, but he was very open-minded. He trusted his friends. They would never do him any harm.

He just laughed at Sister Xue's escape tactics as Director Chen walked up to him leisurely, surrounded by his own large group of

people.



# Chapter 676: Kowloon

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It was partly because of Qin Guan's entourage that Director Chen had to bring all his staff to save his dignity.

They all took a seat in the meeting room. It did not seem like a normal meeting between a director and an actor, but a negotiation among gangsters. If the meeting room was a tea cafe in Miao or Bolan Street, it would have seemed even more like one.

Straightforward men were rare in Hong Kong, but Director Chen asked Qin Guan some direct questions.

"You know this is a musical. I'm aware of your abilities, but I would like to know if you are familiar with the songs."

He didn't have high expectations. All he wanted was for the young man to sing well. The film would be edited during post-production anyway.

Qin Guan's answer didn't disappoint him.

"Yes, I can sing all of them. I have all the material. I don't think that will be a problem."

Director Chen couldn't help but be enchanted by his sparkling eyes. Suddenly, he was filled with boundless pride.

"Great! When shall we begin?"

"Any time you like."

Director Chen clenched his fists. "There are two shooting sites. One is in Shanghai, and the other one is in Beijing. Do you have any questions?"

"Of course not." Qin Guan's kind smile made Chen Kexin like the actor even more. He's such a good boy. I thought he would be arrogant because of his entourage, but he's not.

"Get some rest today. We'll start tomorrow."

"No problem."

Sister Xue turned down their proposal to attend a ball that night with the excuse that Qin Guan was tired after his long journey.

As he walked out of the studio, Qin Guan looked back at the familiar site. It used to be a cradle of famous old films. The Shanghai Paramount building was located in an old tramway alley.

The tattooed transport workers were just ordinary people struggling to make a living at the wharves. They all belonged to different gangs, and their job was to relay any useful information to the director. That information was a chance for them to make some money.

The flourishing city experienced both prosperity and deterioration, color and darkness, vigor and erosion. Hong Kong was the meeting point of traditional Chinese culture and occidental colonial culture.

Its special location and tough residents had led to its success. People from all over the world had taken their delicious food from their own hometowns.

Cong Nianwei had set out in the crowded city with a backpack and a camera. After the meeting, Qin Guan met her at a very strange place.

The West Kowloon Police Station was a prominent landmark. All cab drivers knew where it was. After a short walk, Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei reached the dark side of the city.

Miao Street lay behind the Hong Kong University campus, close to the most prosperous commercial street in Kowloon. Top brands had set up outlet stores there, so there were always long lines before their entrances on the street.

The young couple had not gone there to shop though, but to eat. Anyone who visited Hong Kong had to have a taste of the city's delicious snacks.

One could find any kind of delicious food on the street, including Yuanyan Milk Tea, which was advertised on TVB as the best choice for hungry men.

Most people on the streets were walking and eating at the same time. That was a rare sight in China, as Chinese parents always told their kids to take a seat before eating. That rule didn't apply on the streets though.

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei were drawn to the sea of food. There was a certain variety of takeaway food that all visitors had to try.

First, one had to have a cup of milk tea in the warm winter to avoid choking on any of the other food. The most famous milk tea in Hong Kong was Silk Stocking Tea.

It was not actually made of silk stockings, but it felt as smooth as silk stockings in one's mouth, and its packaging looked like silk after it had soaked for a long time.

Traditional Silk Stocking Tea was hard to find in the bustling city though. Authentic milk tea was made from a mixture of Chinese tea leaves and Sri Lanka and Ceylon leaves. After the leaves were dipped in whole milk, the traditional milk tea got its typical thick, mellow texture.

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei were idling along the street hand in hand, each of them holding a cup of milk tea in their free hand. They had bought some snacks wrapped in paper, eager to taste the special flavors of the city.

"Curry fish balls!" they exclaimed together.

There was a long line before the street stand.

# Chapter 677: Shanghai, The Oriental Pearl

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The fried sanbao there was delicious. There were also some tasty meatballs boiling in a large cauldron filled with grits.

Qin Guan was always patient when it came to food. He stood at the end of the line, breathing in the aroma of the food, which could be smelled even two streets over.

The line was long, but the snacks were served fast. When some people came to stand behind Qin Guan, he had already reached the front of the line.

"Two portions of sanbao, one portion of fried large intestines, and two oven-fresh flaky pastries..."

His standard Mandarin and deep, clear voice attracted the attention of the stand owner.

"One minute!"

Despite feeling uncertain, the kind man didn't stop cooking.

The fresh shrimp, mushrooms, barbecued pork and water chestnuts were mixed and cut into small pieces before some fresh fish was added to the filling.

The cook stuffed the filling into some hollow eggplants and bean curd. That was how sanbao was typically made. Then he poured oil into a frying pan to fry the sanbao. The scent of the food pervaded the winter air.

Two minutes later, the cook took the food out of the pan and poured some juice on it. Qin Guan took some coins out of his pocket, but the boss waved them away and took his phone out of his apron.

"Say cheese!"

He craned his neck back to take a picture with Qin Guan.

"My treat! Next customer!"

Content, the stand owner paid no more attention to Qin Guan. It was actually very common to come across a celebrity on the streets of Hong Kong. People were familiar with them and got along with them very well.

Qin Guan was not that famous in Hong Kong, but he had stumbled upon an indie film lover. The stand owner considered Qin Guan his idol.

...

It was in the dead of the night, when Qin Guan suddenly slapped his own thigh as he lay on his hotel bed.

"What are you doing? We have to get up early tomorrow. Go back to sleep!"

"I should have ordered more food today. There were so many kinds of tasty food at that stand..."

Cong Nianwei turned her back to Qin Guan speechlessly. One shouldn't be fooled by his looks. Despite his star quality, he was still an ordinary person in some aspects.

The next morning, Cong Nianwei left alone and Qin Guan headed to the studio to meet countless other Chinese celebrities, including Zeng Zhiwei, Wu Junru, Zhang Xueyou and Chi Zhenxi, a South Korean star invited by the company.

Director Chen had called everyone together.

Qin Guan greeted the others one by one. He hadn't expected them to be so kind to him.

Where was the discrimination he had heard existed against mainland actors? Qin Guan had never acted in a film with such a big budget in China.

He also knew nothing about the Hong Kong film circle. His big entourage the previous day had sparked some theories among the actors though. They thought Qin Guan had to be an important

person on both sides of the law.

The producer wanted all the actors to collaborate harmoniously. Director Chen was also pretty straightforward. In Hong Kong, it was very common to work overnight.

The large group flew to Shanghai by chartered airplane. It was very annoying to stay with such a large group of strangers. The stars and the three Chinese merchants had brought a large number of staff with them, so they had to meet in Hong Kong and then fly to Shanghai.

On the way to their hotel, Qin Guan met Zhou Xun, the heroine of the film.

She had cooperated with Hong Kong directors lots of times, so she didn't have to meet them in Hong Kong like Qin Guan. She welcomed the exhausted cast and crew in Shanghai elegantly.

"Get some rest first. Time is pressing. We'll get to work at two o'clock!"

The group was dismissed. Two hours later, they got together again at an old European-style hotel.

Director Chen got to work on the streets of Shanghai.

"Shall we try shooting a simple scene first?"

Qin Guan nodded.

After parting with his childhood sweetheart for 10 years, the hero of the film, Lin Jiandong, had become successful and visited the girl's city with his agent.

He Gong, the chief cameraman, was carrying the camera, which weighed more than five kilos. The middle-aged man had not carried a camera personally for many years.

# Chapter 678: Cooperation

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Qin Guan and Wu Junru changed into their costumes and got into a car. The prop master signalled at Chen Kexin and the first scene began.

"Attention, please! Three, two, action!"

The driver started the car as the cameraman zoomed in on Qin Guan's face. Qin Guan was leaning against the backseat, his big sunglasses shielding his eyes so only his sexy stubbled jaw and straight nose were visible.

He was tired after his long trip, so he leaned silently against the door and took a nap as he listened to his chatty agent.

"No kissing. No nudity. No erotic scenes..." Wu Junru told him. Sister Xue, who was talking to an assistant excitedly, had said the same. Wu was speaking Cantonese though, while Sister Xue spoke Mandarin. Both of them were very serious.

Qin Guan's character was pretty tame, but Sister Xue was still adamant.

Qin Guan woke up with a start, as if from a nightmare. Wu considerately handed him a cigarette.

Qin Guan had never smoked, so he felt like coughing awkwardly. He had been a chain smoker in his past life though, so he was somewhat familiar with the smoke.

While Sister Xue was busy worrying about the scene, she suddenly saw Qin Guan smoke slowly, as if he had done this a hundred times before. The white cigarette looked really sexy between his lips.

When he lowered his head to light it up, the rising smoke covered his face, making him look very mysterious.

"I wonder why you agreed to that film. There's no profit for you,

the budget is small, and it will interfere with your original work..." Wu Junru murmured. She looked just like Sister Xue.

When the car passed by a shopping mall, Zhou Xun's poster came into view. She looked very attractive to Qin Guan.

"Never fall in love with the heroine," the kind agent warned Qin Guan. "They will not return your feelings. You are of no help to them. Their aim is always the director."

Ms. Sun was played by Zhou Xun, who was a famous actress in China.

Qin Guan fell silent. He looked expressionlessly out of the window, lost in his memories. The background faded gradually into darkness.

Satisfied, the cameraman turned off the camera.

A conscientious policeman was lingering around on his motorbike.

They are all troublemakers. Why did they choose this busy street as their shooting site? Who are the people inside the car? Why did the highway agency cooperate with them?

Because the temporary police offices and the motorcycle he was riding had been donated by the crew. They had to tolerate them to reap those benefits.

...

The crew was actually very quick. After the first scene, everyone had gotten to know each other well, so they were able to finish fast.

A production assistant saluted the policeman and rushed back to the car with the last stool.

Shanghai is a nice place. Even the policemen here are handsome.

In an effort to save time, Qin Guan and Wu Junru didn't get off the car. They just headed to their next stop right away.



"Hello, Sister Junru. This is our first cooperation. I'm Qin Guan."

The careless woman took his hand.

"I'm finally meeting you in person! You are much more handsome than you look in photos. Look at your hands! You could make a living on them alone!"

The straightforward woman was renowned for her good temper. She became good friends with anyone that she liked. Qin Guan was obviously her kind of person. She spent all their leftover time complimenting him.

Her eyes were fixed on him as they made their way to the old hotel. If Sister Xue hadn't pulled Qin Guan into a dressing room, the actress might have killed him with her eyes.

The dressing room was in good condition. The hotel had many rooms, but this one featured a redwood European vanity mirror. A dresser stood right behind Qin Guan.

He and the other two stars enjoyed the same accommodation. Qin Guan was satisfied, as he didn't want to be treated differently. They were shooting a musical that combined both commercial and indie elements, so the clever Hong Kong producers had managed to get investment through all possible channels.

# Chapter 679: No Comparison, No Harm

---

Qin Guan's old employer, Armani, had provided the costumes. Although high fashion for men was not as expensive as haute couture, which cost billions of yuan, the designer's clothes still elevated the film to a higher level.

The romantic film now looked much more elegant.

Qin Guan put on his white shirt and black suit in the dressing room. The Armani Shanghai Branch had worked overnight to prepare them. Two of the buttons on his chest were unfastened, and he wasn't wearing a tie. Qin Guan looked restrained in that strict formal outfit.

"Are you ready, Mr. Qin?"

The assistant knocked on Qin Guan's door. When she saw Qin Guan, she was left speechless.

Qin Guan nodded and went out of the dressing room, heading for the shooting site of the first scene.

There were three European-style chairs arranged in a line. Zhou Xun, Qin Guan and Zhang Xueyou greeted each other silently and turned towards the director's camera.

"The actors are ready!"

"Lighting, props, assistants, figurants..."

Everything was ready.

"First scene, the press conference. Three, two, action!"

The scene began at his command.

The director, who was played by Zhang Xueyou, was sitting in the middle, answering the tricky questions of the reporters. Qin Guan's eyes were fixed on the charming actress.

She was rubbing her thumb and index finger together nervously.

She seemed unhappy. After so many years of being obsessed with her, she was still fresh in his memory. Zhou Xun denied any connection to him though. She told the reporters that this was the first time they were meeting.

He still didn't want her to feel uncomfortable though, so he tried his best to attract the attention of the reporters and bear all the pressure himself.

"If there are no constructive questions, we'll have to put an end to the conference."

The reporters restrained themselves. Some of them finally raised some good questions that didn't involve gossip.

"Everyone knows that you never shoot films at home. Why did this particular film move you?"

"It was the high salary, good editor and beautiful actress that did it."

His funny answer was actually honest. She is still as beautiful as she was 10 years ago...

A long-lost smile appeared on her beautiful face. Lost in her smile, Qin Guan remembered their first meeting 10 years ago. It had been winter...

Zhou and Zhang became a blur on the camera. Only Qin Guan's profile was visible clearly.

"Cut! Good!"

The three actors cooperated very well. Their line delivery, the position of the camera, the lighting and the figurants had all been perfect, yet Director Chen was pulling his hair with all his strength behind the camera.

He was happy with the smooth shooting process. The producer had invested a lot in the movie, and the three actors were all very talented, but the film would be shot in high resolution, which was

the most clear, but expensive shooting method.

Zhou Xue looked good. The makeup made her face look smooth, but there were lots of pimples on Zhang's face.

This made sense. A man couldn't have the same beautiful face as a girl after all. Zhang was famous for his acting skills, but his face looked like the surface of the moon.

As a director in pursuit of perfection, Chen couldn't express his sorrow with words. Fortunately, the professional cameraman, whose name was He Gong, solved the problem with a few words.

"It doesn't matter. You could just pull the camera a little farther away from Zhang's face. Then edit it, and it'll be perfect."

"That's it!"

Thus, Zhang lost most of his screen-time. Both he and Qin Guan had no idea about that interesting piece of information. Qin Guan was consulting with Zhang about the next scene, as the man was the most experienced when it came to operas.

Qin Guan had never acted in a musical before, but Zhang participated in Hong Kong song and dance dramas very frequently.

As a VIP in both the music and the film circle, he was also curious about the young man. The guy had never released a single record, yet the company had cast him as the lead of the film.

The credit had to be given to Paris Hilton and Qin Guan's performance during her party. The music producers who had attended it had taken pictures and videos of him and studied them later that night.

Some of them had made Qin Guan offers to join the music industry, as some record companies had wanted to cooperate with him after the whole affair with Britney and Madonna.

Qin Guan turned down all offers though. Despite the close cooperation between Hong Kong and American pop musicians, the

Yankees sneered at Hong Kong singers when record companies tried to hire American producers.

"No! Our singers are awful. Even an amateur singer from the Chinese mainland would be better than them. I'd rather waste my songs on Qin Guan than you!"

After hearing this several times, the singers got angry. Of course, we can't compare to him when it comes to acting. He is an award-winning actor after all. But what the f\*ck do you mean? He can sing too? Are you kidding me?

# Chapter 680: Mainland Residents Are So Weird!

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The Yankees showed them the video.

"Look at how he transitions between a real and a fake voice. He is hitting both high and low notes. His vocal range is just..."

The short video shocked the Hong Kong singers and producers, who had had no idea about Qin Guan's singing abilities. He had always kept it a secret.

When Director Chen and his company had been hesitant about choosing the protagonist of the film, these news had been their salvation. They had contacted Qin Guan's studio right away.

That was how Qin Guan had gotten the part. Zhang knew nothing about this though, so he treated Qin Guan as an amateur.

"Can you recite all the songs?"

"Yes!"

"Do you think you will be out of tune?"

"No!"

"Do you think you might forget the lyrics while you are performing?"

"No!"

Then why are you asking me for advice? Young people are too confident nowadays...

Zhang suppressed the impulse to break Qin Guan's confidence. Instead, he planned on showing Qin Guan the reality of the situation.

"Just act out the next scene for me. Walk as you sing. You don't need to concentrate, just go through the process. If you can finish without a pause, you will be fine."

"It's that simple?"

"Yes."

Qin Guan nodded and fixed his costume. He was wearing a torn windcoat and a 1920s cashmere sweater. In combination with his cap, he looked like a figure that had walked out of a hand-painted poster of Shanghai Beach.

He stood before Zhang Xueyou as if there was no one else present. Other actors and crew members were shuttling around them busily, but Director Chen had hidden behind a large box. He was observing the leading actors silently.

Suddenly, Qin Guan took on a mysterious vibe. His eyes looked misty as his beautiful lips delivered the lyrics clearly.

"The strange expression in your eyes leaves me speechless..."

The song had been written especially for the film by a professional Hong Kong musician. The talented actors would use pop music as a way to express themselves. The peaceful tune was nothing for Qin Guan.

He took a few steps back to stand among the busy crew. His clear voice made everyone slow down.

"This must surely mean that you are hearing me out..."

His perfect intonation made him sound like a desperate, heartbroken man.

Zhang was confused. Maybe the young man was not as arrogant as he had expected after all.

How can you not be an experienced opera singer? You are performing like you are on Broadway! People from the mainland are so weird!

When Qin Guan finished singing, he looked at Zhang with a sincere smile, begging for more instructions. Zhang couldn't help but grimace.

"Well done! If you sing like that during the shooting, you'll be okay. Don't worry."

"Really?"

Qin Guan took off his cap excitedly. "Great! I was afraid you'd be unsatisfied with my voice, Brother Zhang. I'm good at performing, but I suck at rehearsing."

Zhang felt a pang in his chest as he breathed in angrily. Someone take this shameless guy away from me!

Director Chen and Zhou Xue burst into laughter.

Zhou had just changed into her costume in the dressing room, when she witnessed the interaction between Qin Guan and Zhang Xueyou.

The more powerful her opponent was, the more excited she got. She was the most talented actress among those who made a living on their looks. She led a free, romantic life and exerted all her energy on love. She never lingered long on one lover.

She was not ashamed by the number of her lovers, nor did she try to keep a man around when the passion faded away. Like most butterflies, she always flew to the most beautiful flower.

As a result, she often had affairs with male co-stars and other crew members. Sister Xue was aware of that, so she had been keeping an eye on her from the very beginning. The expression in Zhou's eyes made her wary.

Qin Guan is doomed. She has set her eyes on him!

All emotions started from that kind of special attention. A figure began lingering in one's eyes and heart, the feeling fermenting slowly until it spouted out.

Please spare Qin Guan, Princess Zhou! He might look clever and romantic, but he is a lovesick idiot. A master of love like you could kill him.



Zhou Xue smiled, golden paillettes glittering on her body. Her soft, hoarse voice melted everyone's hearts.

"I'm ready, Director Chen. I feel great."

This was the first time Zhou was itching to act. Qin Guan's performance had inspired her passion as an actress.

A good partner was also a good opponent. No matter their gender.

Chen Kexin rubbed his hands together excitedly and rushed to the main camera, gesturing that they were all set.

# Chapter 681: The Clever Shanghainese

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The romantic scene between the hero and the heroine began.

Qin Guan and Zhou Xue looked into each other's eyes, conveying meanings that words couldn't express. Their eyes spoke for them, expressing their doubt, slight anger, and incomparable loss.

As Zhou Xue was about to get lost in Qin Guan's attracting eyes, the lights dimmed. Suddenly, she left in a hurry, as if relieved of a heavy load. Qin Guan was left standing in the dark, the lone sombre light highlighting his expressive eyes.

An assistant standing by with a thick pile of paperwork felt attracted to his gloomy eyes.

When she sighed, no one knew if it was over Qin Guan or his character.

"Cut! Perfect!"

The director brought everyone back to reality.

"You all worked hard. Go get something to eat. We could film two more scenes afterwards. The rent for the circus field is unbelievably high!"

"So is the hotel. I think prices here are much higher than in Hong Kong."

"Hong Kong and the mainland are pretty much the same..."

No one objected to the director's arrangement. People from Hong Kong were accustomed to such high-intensive work.

Unlike their Chinese peers, who shot scenes slowly one by one, Hong Kong filmmakers could finish a 40-episode TV series in one week. Time equaled money. In an era when films were being produced left and right, it took them only three days to finish a film.

Besides, they were shooting in Shanghai. The Shanghainese were

very business-oriented. Back in the old times, most merchants from South China gathered in Shanghai, which everyone called "the bellwether of the Asian economy". Even ordinary citizens inherited and passed on these fine traditions.

That might explain why the manager of the field was currently walking up to them with a strict expression on his face.

"Will you be working till late at night?"

"Yes, our contract states that we will be charged by the day."

"I know that, there's no need to remind me. Let's talk about the extra payment for the labor workers."

"Labor workers? What do you mean by that?"

"Hey, don't go back on your word now. If you work at night, the gatekeeper has to be present."

"Of course, but he is in charge of the gate. How does that relate to us?"

"It does! Under normal circumstances, the gatekeeper would only check on the facilities once. If you are working here though, he will have to keep an eye on your crew. He will be up all night."

The man talked with the assistant director patiently. In the end, the director had to promise that he would pay the extra money.

"If I knew that you would be burning the midnight oil, I wouldn't have rent it out to you. I have to pay the janitors..."

"Okay."

"The security personnel that works the night shift..."

"Okay."

The assistant director was happy to see the cunning man leave. He felt as if countless flies were buzzing around his head. The manager left the bustling set to meet with his own team.

"How did the negotiation go, Lao Han?"

"I did it. They will pay the extra fees."

The Shanghainese cheered in low voices. They dared not raise their voices, because they were afraid of being heard by the people inside.

"People from Hong Kong are so nice!"

"They are too careless with contracts. We have to work overtime. We deserve that money."

"Yes. One should be careful what they sign."

They criticized the crew happily, just like the cunning manager, before they disappeared in the dark with the money.

The crew finished their lunch boxes in a hurry. Their simple lunch had been bought from a cheap nearby restaurant. The rice, meat and vegetables had only cost 10 yuan.

The stars had originally planned on dining out together, but they had been defeated by the expression in Director Chen's eyes and the lunch boxes brought by Sister Xue.

The Shanghai bouilli was a must for any carnivorous animal.

Zhang Xueyou opened the jar and saw the steaming pork. The crystal red pork looked like transparent jelly and shook slightly as Sister Xue set the jar down on the table.

A sweet smell hit everyone's noses. The large pieces of streaky pork, which were soaked in a secret sauce made of ice sugar, lay before them like tantalizing beauties.

The white, glutinous southern rice and vegetables were a perfect match for the sweet pork.

"It's wonderful!"

Zhou and Zhang were too lazy to move. They just sat down across from Qin Guan, took out some disposable chopsticks and buried their faces into their lunch boxes.

No speaking was allowed during meals; no talking during naptime.

The old saying was always obeyed in China. People had no time to pay attention to other things when there was delicious food before them.

As Qin Guan focused on his food shamelessly, he felt a touch on his leg. Huh? Maybe one of the guys kicked me accidentally. Qin Guan didn't take it seriously. He explored his jar with his chopsticks and found the last piece of pork. How lucky!

## Chapter 682: Unromantic

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Before he could rejoice, his leg was hit hard again. The hit was strong enough to make the pork on his chopsticks fall back on the pile of rice. The juices splashed his face, creating several funny red spots.

Qin Guan looked up in confusion. He was right. It had been Zhou Xue who had kicked him.

"What's wrong, Sister?"

Qin Guan smiled brightly at Zhou, wiping the juices off his face.

Zhou was shocked. There was only one word echoing in her mind. "Sister... Sister... Sister..."

Zhang suddenly flushed. As the oldest among the three, all he could do was stand up silently and leave. He was a well-bred man after all.

As soon as he entered a small room to get some rest, he spit his rice out.

"Ha ha! That boy is so funny! Water! Where is some water? I'm choking! I need some water!"

Unaware of what was happening, Qin Guan fixed his sparkling eyes on Zhou, waiting for her reply. Why did you kick me so hard? What happened?

Zhou's expression kept changing. Enlightened, Qin Guan suddenly slapped his own head.

"Sorry, my bad!" Qin Guan apologized, stirring the jar with all his strength. He was not paying any attention to her pale face anymore.

"Got it!" His happy cry attracted Sister Xue's attention.

"I was so busy eating that I forgot to take care of the only lady present. My bad, my bad. Here you go."

He slowly put a large piece of pork in Zhou's bowl. It was covered in juices.

"Take it, Sister Zhou. It's delicious."

Sister Xue ran out of there, covering her mouth. All the idlers in the room left as well, shrugging and lowering their heads.

"What are they doing? They haven't finished their lunch yet. Anyway, just forget them. Have some more rice, Sister Zhou!"

"Ha ha!" Even calm Director Chen managed to escape in time.

Bang! Zhou threw her chopsticks down onto the table.

"Qin Guan!"

"Yes?"

"Are you an idiot? Don't you know why a woman would kick a man's leg?"

Qin Guan nodded blankly with his mouth wide open. Then he shook his head hard. Suddenly, Zhou lost all interest in the young man.

He is incompatible with me. Was that tenderness and love in his eyes just a performance?

Zhou liked clever men. The moment they had looked into each other's eyes, Zhou had gotten lost in the feeling. Before that feeling could take the form of fireworks though, it had been extinguished by the pork's smell.

His IQ is as low as a Husky's!

The mood had been destroyed completely. Zhou stood up.

"I'm full. Keep the pork for yourself. Enjoy your meal!"

Qin Guan shivered as he looked at her angry back, but the sight of the delicious food on the table distracted him right away.

"Thank you so much, Sister! I have a large stomach to fill!"

Zhou nearly fell down. She sped up and left in a hurry, her romantic fantasy bursting like a bubble. Qin Guan kept eating at the spare table. Sounds of laughter were getting louder and louder outside. He smiled cunningly.

Sister Xue returned and stood behind Qin Guan awkwardly. He stood up leisurely and cleaned the table. Then the two of them returned to the old hotel.

The crew made good use of their accommodation. They could both shoot and stay there, and the hotel was also very close to the Paramount studio, so the producer was very satisfied with it.

As Qin Guan closed the door of his room, Sister Xue patted her own chest. Her heart was still fluttering in fear.

"Are you an idiot? Why were you messing with Zhou? She is very good at acting!"

Qin Guan collapsed on his soft, fluffy bed. "I love the steel-frame bed and the soft mattress. This hotel is perfect!" he replied, trying to avoid the subject.

Sister Xue was enraged. Before she could give Qin Guan a lecture, he put one of his arms under his head and turned to look at the crystal lamp on the ceiling. "What are you so afraid of? Isn't that the best way to deal with Zhou?" he asked.

His words confused Sister Xue.

"All sixth-generation directors watch the news. They warned me about her, so I knew her least favorite type of man. Isn't this good news for any agent? No affairs. No ambiguity. The filming will start and finish quietly. Everyone wins."

Sister Xue was astonished by his problem-solving method. He was getting more and more mature. He would do well in the entertainment circle after all.

She still felt sad to see him grow up though.



Suddenly, an assistant knocked on the door.

# Chapter 683: Giving A Lesson To Hong Kongers

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"Mr. Qin, your next scene will begin in 10 minutes."

"Got it! Sister Xue, look at me! I'm changing clothes. You haven't seen my body for a long time. I bet that if you compare me to Yin, you'll lose any interest in him."

Qin Guan never changed. Sister Xue went out of the room with a knowing smile.

No one was faster than a model changing his clothes, unless one was wearing nothing at all. A few minutes later, Qin Guan was wearing a pair of soft, comfortable velvet pyjamas.

He Gong followed Qin Guan with the camera. They had to walk a long way before they reached the hotel swimming pool. When the walky-talky rang, they exchanged a look.

The old hotel still had spiral stairs with smooth iron handrails. If one looked down from the top, they got dizzy. Qin Guan went out of his room and wandered in the empty hallway. He had been suffering from insomnia for years.

Suddenly, he leapt from the stairs and fell down like an angel with broken wings. Before anyone could scream out, he slid down along the handrail like a kid playing on a slide. He moved down the end of the rail wildly as He Gong filmed him. Indie film directors loved scenes like that. It looked like a dream on his camera.

No one but Qin Guan knew how much it hurt to do this. The friction between his bottom and the rail was very painful. If he slid down one more floor, he would be the first actor to have their butt catch fire during shooting.

The director stood by the end of the stairs silently. He didn't give Qin Guan any instructions, so he just worked his way to the swimming pool across the dark hall jerkily. Director Chen looked

at the lonely figure from behind the camera.

His acting skills are perfect. He treats even the simplest scene seriously. Everyone can feel his sadness and confusion.

Meanwhile, Qin Guan cried to himself. My butt hurts!

It was a wonderful misunderstanding.

Qin Guan reached the end of the way, where the crew was gathered, amid loud shouts of applause. The water in the large pool glittered under the pale moonlight.

Zhou Xue was standing on the other side of the pool in a pink swimming suit. They looked at each other from afar.

Both the hero and the heroine had stayed up late to swim. Their meeting was a romantic coincidence. Qin Guan ravished her with a kiss.

Yes, that's right. Qin Guan grabbed this opportunity to kiss her. Generally speaking, such things only happened in stories about aggressive male CEOs, but now it was also happening in a musical.

Everyone gathered around the pool curiously to watch the mysterious award-winning actor kiss the girl. All kinds of idlers showed up, pretending to be working on something.

Zeng Zhiwei and Zhang Xueyou hid in a corner, holding cups of coffee in their hands. Wu Junru stood next to the director, her eyes fixed on the camera. Everyone was captivated by the beautiful couple.

Suddenly, Qin Guan jumped into the pool without hesitation, only to realize that the water barely reached his knees.

The prop team looked on blankly. The prop master, who was a veteran, opened the gate before the director could go crazy. We can pour water into the pool while we are shooting.

Qin Guan was not affected by any means. He just hid his face under the water like an ostrich in the face of danger. He had to

perform under the water anyway.

Shocked by his quick reaction, the crew adjusted the angle of the camera. Qin Guan had saved the scene and avoided a retake.

Everyone had thought it was impossible. Usually, they would wait for the director to adjust the setting to perfection before they continued. That was a common routine for actors in both the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong.

Qin Guan was used to Western methods though. His experience with indie films had taught him to be more flexible and innovative.

No one wanted to waste any time or money, so Qin Guan's improvisation had taught them a good lesson.

# Chapter 684: A Hot Kiss

---

The Hong Kongers, who always looked down upon mainlanders, were shocked. Director Chen held back the word "cut" and adjusted the camera to shoot underwater.

Shooting underwater set higher standards for the actors, but Sister Xue relaxed as she watched Qin Guan through the camera. He had grown up by the seaside, so he had experienced great storms and waves. A shallow pool was nothing for him.

The water was clear enough to see the bottom of the pool. Qin Guan's face seemed to sparkle like jade. His eyebrows and eyes were softened by the ripples, and his red lips looked splendid on his fair face. Anyone could get lost in them.

A few bubbles came out of his mouth. One of them got stuck to his eyebrow, reluctant to part with its handsome master.

"He's so beautiful!" Wu Junru, who was a very sensitive woman, murmured from behind the camera. A splashing sound brought her back to reality.

Zhou Xue had jumped into the water in her pretty pink swimsuit from the other side of the pool. The water level was now high enough for a girl to swim in the pool.

Among all famous actresses, Zhou was the most petite one. Thanks to her perfect features and inspirational looks though, she did not feel inferior to the taller actresses. Her good figure was clear under the water. She looked like an Ondine. Everyone's attention was on her as Director Chen clenched his fists.

Three, two, one... Now!

Suddenly, Qin Guan appeared before Zhou. The two of them met in the pool, their blank eyes suddenly becoming clear as they caught sight of each other. The flames in their eyes got brighter and brighter. Qin Guan put his hand on the back of Zhou's head

and kissed her fiercely on the lips.

Frightened by his sudden attack, Zhou resisted underwater. Her long black hair spread slowly like the most seductive, dangerous kind of seaweed. Qin Guan got lost in the sweet kiss and forgot about their surroundings. It didn't matter that they were underwater and the girl was struggling in his embrace. A kiss was enough for an aggressive man like him.

His emotion got a response from the woman, who was in love with him. She gradually stopped hitting him and surrendered to his kiss, which felt as scorching as the sun. Her fair arms locked around his waist as they kissed as if there was no one else present. Qin Guan's black pyjamas were floating on the surface of the water like water lilies.

After a while, they ran out of oxygen. Qin Guan, who was the one who had started the kiss, came back to his senses. His eyes opened underwater. They were not filled with desire and love anymore. They were as clear as the water. He looked at the woman silently, their lips still touching. Then he pushed her away and turned around without hesitation.

Zhou Xue was still in a daze as Qin Guan got out of the pool. He walked along the passage in his soaked pyjamas, leaving her behind. Zhou Xue stood in the water, watching her first love walk away. The water drops on the floor that served as proof of his presence brought her back to reality.

"Cut! Perfect!" Chen Kexin shouted excitedly.

As soon as he heard his shout, Qin Guan craned his neck around the corner of the passage.

"Are we done, director? Can I return to my room? If you need me, just tell my assistant!"

Qin Guan was pleading with his eyes. Chen waved him away. "No problem! Go get some rest. Let's all call it a day!"

Excused, Qin Guan rushed up the stairs. His wet pyjamas weighed almost five kilos. A cold winter breeze was blowing in Shanghai. He could catch a cold the next day if he didn't take any immediate measures.

There was no one along the passage, so he started taking off his clothes as he walked. As soon as he entered his room, he rushed to the bathroom. When he heard a sound at the door, he shouted, "Get me a cup of tea, Sister Xue! Thanks a lot!"

Steam rose from the bathtub as he let out a sigh of relief.

When he walked out of the bathroom in a bath towel, he found a white cup on the table. Red ginger tea was very popular in Southern China. It was the perfect drink to have in a cold, damp night in that strange city.

# Chapter 685: Spring Dandelions

---

The people close to us always stay with us, no matter the circumstances. They might be our family, our lovers, or our children. No matter who they are though, they have to be cherished. They are the ones that make our short life wonderful.

Qin Guan soon fell asleep on the soft mattress.

The next morning, he felt completely refreshed. He went into the cafeteria with a yawn and kindly turned down a Western breakfast. Wu Junru, who was the warmest person among the Hong Kongers, greeted him. "Hi, handsome! Why don't you have something to eat? We'll get to work soon, so..."

Before she could finish her words, Sister Xue entered in casual clothes. "I got them. Quick!"

In the simple lunch box she was holding were wontons. She had also gotten a bag of fried pork buns with sesame and spring onion.

It would be a pity to visit Shanghai and not try the authentic local breakfast. The small crystal-clear wontons were floating in pork bone soup. One could even see the red shrimp inside. The oily buns were crisp, but when one bit into them, their juices flowed out.

Zhou Xue, who had just gotten up and entered the room, carried her delicious food to another table and set it down unceremoniously. By the time Qin Guan came back to his senses, he realized there were only three wontons and one bun left for him. That was a miserable breakfast.

"Make yourselves at home! Try these! They are authentic Shanghai buns!"

Zhou Xue's smile scared Qin Guan. His struggle was nothing for an experienced love warrior like her. This was obvious through their cooperation.



Her performance was getting better and better. The powerful woman finally bared her fangs and claws and revealed the real acting power of an A-level star. She was Qin Guan's equal. Everyone around them cheered them on.

They were an inspiration for others. In less than a week, they finished all their scenes in Shanghai. The crew packed up while Director Chen contacted his associates in Beijing.

The last scene would be shot in a yard by the Beijing city moat. The prop team had already completed the archaistic set.

It was a shabby warehouse, a lot like plant 798, that stood stubbornly by the frozen moat. Inside it were old cotton-padded jackets, military coats, enamel mugs, old food tickets, thick sweaters, red stars... All characteristic features of the era, that reminded people of a newly-awakened China that had been short on resources. The memory of each hero and heroine was buried there.

Qin Guan was wearing a thick green sweater, a grey coat, a pair of old glasses and a military cross-body bag.

"Ha! What's this? What a handsome boy!"

Qin Guan went inside, bending his neck a little. He looked like the director of a disciplinary school.

When he spotted the iron stove, which was the only source of warmth in the room, he rushed over to it. He took some cinder dust out of the stove with an iron hook to make the flames burn more fiercely.

"Who made this coat? The cotton inside is tied in knots. It can't keep me warm!"

Zhou Xue was rubbing her hands in front of her chest, not caring about her image. "You should be content with what you have. Look at me! They got me a scratchy sweater!" she countered Qin Guan's complaint.

Qin Guan turned around to look at her and lowered his head with trembling shoulders. Zhou Xue's hair looked like instant noodles. It was so bad that one could hardly bear to look at it. She was also wearing a red sweater and a messy purple skirt that made her look like a bumpkin.

"Ha ha!" Qin Guan burst into laughter. Suddenly, he felt a small hand on his sideburns. It was Zhou's hand.

Worried, Qin Guan stepped back unconsciously.

"Don't move! You have some cotton batting on your face!" Qin Guan stopped. Her small cold hand touched his face like a feather. It paused in his hair and then suddenly covered his face.

Qin Guan tried to move his head away, but the hand wouldn't leave. He looked up into Zhou's big almond-shaped eyes.

They seemed reluctant to betray anything. Her meaningful gaze confused Qin Guan, even though he had experienced a lot of things in his life.

Sensing the ambiguous atmosphere, he stood up to leave. Zhou retracted her hand just in time.

"Look! I was not messing with you!"

Qin Guan looked down at the fine white cotton ball in her hand. His poor IQ did not allow him to think properly.

"I didn't expect the cotton in this shabby coat to be this white. It looks as romantic and airy as a spring dandelion."

Zhou's voice got lower and lower. Its hoarseness made it sound really sexy.

# Chapter 686: Suppression and Resistance

---

Qin Guan was scared of her. Suddenly, the crew pushed its way through the gate.

"Mr. Qin, Ms. Zhou, the set is ready. You can get to work."

A group of people poured into the room, dissolving the charged atmosphere. Qin Guan had been saved. He rushed into the dressing room, suddenly recalling that they would be shooting all the erotic scenes that day.

There were at least three erotic scenes that took place at the same location. It seemed like this was his destiny.

Zhou Xue's high heels walked closer and closer. Qin Guan had to encourage himself mentally. You are thinking too much. Zhou is always like this. Her eyes are full of emotion...

After a constructive mental pep talk, Qin Guan turned around. He wasn't nervous anymore. He just smiled at Zhou as she approached. His pure smile stunned her for a few seconds.

"Attention, everyone!" Director Chen shouted. "First scene! Three, two, one... Action!"

As soon as he spoke, the two actors switched to working mode.

Crack!

Zhou shut off the lamp. The window of the shabby warehouse became the only source of light. The cold moonlight hit Qin Guan's face, leaving Zhou in the dark.

Qin Guan sat down on the edge of the double-decker, looking sad and desperate. The next day, his beloved girl would travel to America with a director. He had failed to give her what she wanted.

Zhou loved him though. She wanted to give her love and her virginity, the most precious gift a woman could give, to him. She

pressed Qin Guan onto the wooden bed roughly. Everyone stared at her in astonishment. The couple's heavy pants echoed around the dark room as Qin Guan struggled.

He didn't underestimate the petite girl. He would never look down on a woman after his experience with Mou Xiaoliu.

Zhou's sudden attack caused his back to hit the wooden bed hard. It hurt so much!

Qin Guan instinctively tried to get away, but Zhou sat down on his waist heavily to stop him. Caught off guard, Qin Guan fell down again.

Wait! Wait, director! This was not in the script! This is rape!

Before he could get up and protest, Zhou started kissing his eyebrows, nose, eyes and lips. He felt her hand reach for his belt.

What are you doing?

Their first kiss, which had been initiated by Qin Guan, had been beautiful and violent, but empty of any emotion. He couldn't tell if Zhou's kiss was real or not.

Qin Guan sensed the danger. The expression in his eyes was still clear, and he could distinguish between acting and reality. He had never gotten lost in a performance.

Life was drama, and drama was life. He would rather be the master than the coward. His eyes were glittering, and his breath rose like a mist amid the cold winter of Northern China.

He looked up at Zhou before he suddenly flipped her over and put his hands on her bare back. Zhou screamed as Qin Guan reversed the situation. The bed creaked in the dark as he landed on top of her.

Their sparkling eyes met, one pair on top, the other on the bottom. "Cut!" Director Chen said before he applauded. The strict director did not do this often, but in his opinion, they had

interpreted the original script perfectly.

"Wonderful! Did you talk about the script beforehand? You expressed the emotional conflict, sorrow and despair of the lovers perfectly! I am so lucky to be working with you two!"

Qin Guan's first reaction was to complain to the excited director, but he chose to remain silent. He could feel a high heel grinding against his foot.

Because of their difference in height, Zhou Xue had to stand on a stool to tell him, "Hey! Wait for me!"

Help! Cong Nianwei!

As expected, Zhou took things even further during the next erotic scenes. Qin Guan had to withstand all her crazy advances.

Hey, don't grind your butt against my crotch, sister! You are half-naked! Hey! You shouldn't be touching my chest either!

Director Chen got what he wanted, but Qin Guan had to suffer for it.

# Chapter 687: Pushing Forward The Film Festival

---

Finally, he heard the signal he had been waiting for echo around the warehouse.

"Wonderful! We finished the last scene! 'Perhaps, Love' is officially completed!"

Everyone cheered, laughed and jumped, all the while congratulating each other.

Qin Guan laughed along with Zhou and pretended to be shooting at her with a gun.

"Ha ha!"

Qin Guan had had the last laugh. He had kept up a mental and physical defense and won a medal for resisting her seduction.

The unexpected gesture stunned Zhou, who turned his action over in her mind. She slowly smiled at Qin Guan. He must be one of those funny, childish guys...

The man who was deeply in love with her only existed in the film and her imagination. That man was quite different from this one.

The film was finally completed. The cameras were shut off as her imaginary lover melted in her hands along with the falling snowflakes.

In 2004, the winter lingered on until spring. The cold wind brought along snowflakes that did not match the season. The large snowflakes were dancing in the sky like the fake ones used in films before finally landing on the ground.

Zhou watched Qin Guan run happily in the snow. One minute later, he rushed back. "F\*ck! It's really cold!" he complained.

He had been so happy that he had forgotten that he had only

been wearing a hoodie and a pair of slippers during his performance. Sister Xue covered him with his coat gently. The warm scene made everyone smile.

The director invited all his friends to Beijing for a celebratory feast, but Sister Xue, who had gotten a call from overseas, had to turn down the invitation.

Qin Guan's team was packing his luggage in his room. He sat down on the couch next to the door and left the room to them. Suddenly, the half-closed door opened.

Zhou Xue leaned against the door frame and chatted with Qin Guan quietly.

"Are you leaving today?"

"Yes. We have booked tickets."

"Why are you in such a hurry?"

"The film festival I will be participating in is being pushed forward. I have to attend the award ceremony."

Zhou fell silent. Does this mean that he will win another award? Maybe I should have sought an opportunity abroad.

Zhou shook her head. She knew perfectly well that foreigners found her looks a little boring. Plus, her acting skills were too restrained for them.

"I thought I scared you away," she said, admiration and embarrassment filling her voice.

Qin Guan smiled. "Of course not, Sister Zhou. I know how things are between us."

Zhou burst into laughter and took out a cigarette case.

"Light my cigarette for me before you go."

"Okay!"

Qin Guan stood up from the couch and took the silver lighter. A

small orange flame bloomed between his hands.

His busy team and the passing cleaners in the white aprons seemed to walk in slow motion amid the smoke.

Crack!

Qin Guan shut the lighter. When he looked up, he felt a pair of sweet-smelling lips brush against his jaw.

"Idiot!"

Zhou walked away with a strange feeling, leaving Qin Guan stupefied.

Goodbye...

Sister Xue had no time to pay attention to them. After confirming the schedule again, they left the hotel right away. Meanwhile, Director Chen was looking forward to a bright future with the other members of the crew.

"I wonder if my film will be lucky enough to win an award..."

Qin Guan had no idea about Chen's ambitions. He had to show up on the red carpet of the opening ceremony as soon as he got off the plane.

The staff of L'Oréal was considerably waiting for him on the site. After Qin Guan's schedule was confirmed, they would talk about their future cooperation.

The Berlin Film Festival was the first European film festival to open in 2004. In an effort to beat the Cannes Festival, the organizing committee had permanently moved the date of the opening ceremony to February. Many stars were caught unprepared. As a result, the ones with no nominations turned down the invitation to the festival. That was why Qin Guan had gone to Berlin in a hurry.

After negotiating with the crew of "Lost Smile", the organizing committee had sent Qin Guan an invitation.



# Chapter 688: Going Crazy On The Red Carpet

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Jude Law and Nicole Kidman were not able to attend the opening ceremony due to their tight schedules, but their films would still be screened during the festival.

One could imagine how many actors would participate in the event.

Qin Guan had finished his job, so he just took a connecting flight to Berlin. He was really looking forward to seeing the four hale old men.

The next morning, as his assistant was adjusting his bow tie, Director Luchan showed up.

"Qin Guan?"

"Yes?"

"Are you aware that directors and actors will be walking on the carpet separately? They want to make the event even grander."

"I know."

"Just relax! Take care!"

The director was a warm-hearted man. His first impulse after getting that notice was to let Qin Guan know. The actor was like a child in a strange environment. He needed a team to stay with him.

However, he had forgotten that Qin Guan was also a supermodel. As a sponsor of the festival, L'Oréal wanted to see its product ambassador appear alone in pictures, not accompanied by a group of old men.

Despite his rough schedule, Qin Guan remained calm as he walked through the flashing lights silently. He was the star that

stayed the longest on the red carpet.

This was the second time he was walking on the red carpet in Berlin, a city that favored the Chinese. The reporters suddenly recognized his familiar figure.

The Best Actor Award Winner of the 53rd Ceremony was coming!

Screams fell and rose. Qin Guan's every step seemed to make the earth shake.

"Mr. Qin! Look at me! Please! My son is only three years old!"

"Can you smile for me, Mr. Qin? Your smile could save the world!"

"Don't leave! Please don't leave!"

"He is walking away! Stop! Look over here!"

The crazy reporters spent all their film on Qin Guan, not caring about the crowd or the unbearable smell. They used this opportunity to record the young actor's every movement with their cameras. He was the best topic of conversation in the entire opening ceremony.

The organizing committee did not want the sharp-tongued critics and reporters to laugh at the absence of famous actors.

They had invited Qin Guan sincerely, and the actor, who loved the Berlin Film Festival, had come at once. They would never forget his kindness.

The next participant, the entire cast and crew of "Samaria Girls", was waiting by the end of the red carpet. It was a film from the Republic of Korea. All the actors and the director had come to the ceremony. For them, an invitation there was the best acknowledgement of the film's success. Besides, it was an erotic film. They needed an award in order to promote it.

The two leading actresses had followed the director to Berlin, which was a holy place for Korean filmmakers. It was still early

spring, so they were trembling in their revealing evening dresses, which had been tailored by Korean designers.

The two girls struggled to suppress their shivers, but the star ahead of them had stayed on the carpet too long. They both felt miserable.

Guo Zhimin, the younger girl, who was about 19 years old and the pearl of her family, couldn't help but complain.

"The man before us has gone too far! He's been on the carpet for so long! He's shameless!"

Han Xiuyun was calmer than her. She checked the list and then craned her neck in the direction of the red carpet, all the while squeezing her bare shoulders. The man on the carpet was trying his best to move forward, but he was stopped repeatedly by the reporters and the festival staff. Then people started grabbing him to take pictures.

Han Xiuyun had originally been a model, so she recognized Qin Guan's tall, handsome figure.

"It's Qin Guan!"

Suddenly, the calm girl turned into a crazy fangirl.

"Director Kim, Director Kim! Isn't that Qin Guan? Tell me I'm not wrong!"

Qin Guan's name acted like a magic spell. Shocked, Guo stopped complaining.

The director nodded solemnly. "Yes, it is, but you don't need to act like crazy. You are just as talented as he is. If our film succeeds, you'll enjoy the same international fame he does."

It was a pity that his strategy failed. The actresses didn't pay attention to his ambitious words. They were too concentrated on the handsome man walking to the other end of the carpet.

"It's Qin Guan! What should I do? Do I look nice today?"

The two girls bounced up and down hand in hand.

"The cast and crew of 'Samaria Girls' is up next!"

Before they could calm down, the festival staff told them to walk on the carpet. Suddenly, Director Ki-Duk Kim found himself up in the air, supported from both sides by the young girls.

# Chapter 689: Another Award

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"Qin Guan, wait for us! We are coming!"

The girls rushed over to Qin Guan.

Qin Guan had just broken out of the ring of reporters. Before he could let out a sigh of relief, he heard a roar behind him.

"Qin Guan!"

The roar sounded desperate. Qin Guan turned around with a professional smile and faced an astonishing spectacle.

Two female actresses in black and white dresses were supporting a man between them. The man seemed like the most normal person among them. The two girls looked flushed in the cold wind. Their hair floated like a cloud behind them as a disgusting bubble of snot formed on the man's nostril.

They were moving at lightning speed. When Qin Guan stopped walking, even the angry director grew excited. What a good opportunity!

A cold light flashed across Director Kim's eyes. Taking advantage of their momentum, he rushed over to Qin Guan and embraced him. The two of them stood together shoulder to shoulder. Meanwhile, the cunning girls came to stand on both sides of Qin Guan, locking his arms in place.

The reporters went crazy again. A battle began as they pointed their cameras at them.

"Ha ha! Director Kim and Qin Guan are acquainted! This is striking news! It will make the headlines!"

The entertainment reporters from SBS were crying, while the representatives of the leading Korean fashion magazines "Cindy" and "Ceci" were hugging each other excitedly.

It's the Berlin Festival Best Actor Award Winner! He's the

favorite of the organizing committee! If Director Kim knows him, does this mean that he will win an award during this festival?

No one really cared about the Koreans' short stay on the carpet. They only cared about taking good pictures.

Qin Guan's schedule was delayed for a few minutes. Despite the three Koreans hanging on to his body for dear life though, he still managed to look perfect until he reached the other end of the carpet.

Sister Xue gazed at the four of them coldly, with her arms folded across her chest. Unable to withstand her stare, the three shameless Koreans let Qin Guan go. Sister Xue pulled him to the backstage area.

"Don't show kindness to everyone, Qin Guan! Maybe they were competing with you over who would make tomorrow's headlines!" Sister Xue lowered her voice cautiously.

If Director Kim, who was a renowned man in his own country, heard her comment, he would be quite offended.

The old directors patted Qin Guan on the shoulder happily. They were planning on having a drink in a small pub nearby. All Qin Guan had to do was show up at the award ceremony on time.

As he waited silently in his room, he recalled the other nominees of the 54th Ceremony. He had a bad feeling about this.

The winter in Berlin was much colder. When night fell, Qin Guan put on his black formal outfit.

All the lamps in the hall were lit. Another fierce battle was about to begin.

The host on the stage opened the envelopes in his hands one by one and handed the awards to the winners.

As usual, the most important award would be announced last. Qin Guan was sitting steadily, affecting everyone around him. All

he could do now was rely on his luck.

Silence prevailed in the hall as the audience listened to the host carefully.

"The winner of the Outstanding Artistic Contribution Award is... 'Dawn'!"

Director Luchan grew nervous. The next award would be the Best Actor. All the cameras focused on Qin Guan. If he was not the winner, it would be really sad news.

The host, who was a playful man, opened the envelope slowly with trembling hands.

The audience grew more and more nervous as he drawled, "The winner of the Best Actor Award of the 54th Ceremony is..."

All the lights fixed on the only Chinese person in the room, Qin Guan.

"Qin Guan! With the film 'Lost Embrace'!"

A deafening applause echoed around the hall. The Silver Bear seemed to be waving at Qin Guan as he walked to the stage slowly. He always remained indifferent to both admiration and humiliation. He hugged the host and took the bear and the microphone from him.

Then he turned around with the award, put the microphone against his lips and began delivering his second speech at the Berlin Film Festival.

# Chapter 690: The Acceptance Speech

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"First, I would like to express my gratitude to the directing team. They are all from different countries, just like the UN, but they have an unerring ability to spot talent. After expressing their different opinions, they decided to offer me the lead. I want to thank them for their appreciation and love, as well as the trust they put in me. The audience knows that this was quite an unusual film compared to the films I have acted in before in terms of plot, characterization and shooting methods."

"It was definitely a challenging test for my acting skills. I would also like to express my appreciation to the senior actors that participated in the film, who have all dedicated their lives to indie films. We should make some space for them on the stage. They make all European film festivals better. They have been the wheels of progress on our journey. This award belongs to the US. I would like to share my profits with all the silent contributors."

"Of course, those contributors should be no more than five, and the amount can be up to 100,000 at the most. Otherwise, I'll be suffering a loss."

The audience burst into laughter as Qin Guan put the award down and started counting on his fingers.

Sister Xue buried her face in her hands, which were dressed in white gloves with pearls. She knew Qin Guan very well. He is not joking! He means it!

"I would also like to thank the producers and the distributing companies. Our film has not been officially in theaters yet, but this award can help you relax in advance!"

Qin Guan raised the Silver Bear again amid a round of applause and catcalls.

"I'm not trying to flatter the organizing committee, but I



wouldn't complain if it worked. Our film will be a huge success thanks to this award."

The buyers of the distributing rights were ecstatic under the stage. Good boy! Well done! The box office will be fantastic thanks to this award!

Qin Guan waited until the audience calmed down.

"My first visit to Berlin was last year for the same award ceremony. At the same time this year, I'm in the same theater and same position, holding the same award. Only the audience is different."

"I, Qin Guan..." He took a sincere bow before the audience. "... am grateful to the Berlin Film Festival for giving the same award to the same person for two consecutive years. I recognize its fairness and justice, and I can see why it is considered the strictest international film festival."

"Thank you for your approval of me and my performance. Thank you for relating to this story of a father's love. Your love for the film makes me happier than your approval of me!"

His speech drew tears from the directors.

"The boy is really kind."

"The bastard is so sensational..."

The four directors started crying their eyes out. The people around them looked at them with a touched expression in their eyes. This was an emotional catharsis for the indie filmmakers and the joy they found in their work.

Suddenly, Qin Guan looked up to the main camera with a big smile.

"I want to thank all the members of my studio, Sister Xue and Sister Qu. You have always been taking care of me. As for the person waiting for me at home... See? This is the third one! We'll

fill that shelf soon! Just wait for me!"

He jumped up in joy before the stunned audience. Then he diverted their attention with his conclusion.

"I will end my long speech here. Everyone must be anxious to find out who the winner of the Best Film Award is, so I'll surrender the stage to our dear host, Runco!"

Everyone shouted all at once, the earth-shaking sound echoing around the hall. The ceremony had originally been a bit dull due to the absence of most superstars, but Qin Guan had brightened things up.

The director burst into excited tears backstage. He hugged everybody he came across and shouted, "You can't sneer at us anymore! Look at the powerful Berlin Festival, you bastards! You'll be shocked by the ratings tomorrow!"

He was a director with dignity, ideals and ambitions, so the audience ratings of the grand ceremony would make him very popular. Qin Guan's award would be proof of his directing ability.

As Qin Guan got off the stage with the award, the audience cheered on. The next award had made everyone wild with joy.

"The Best Director Award goes to... Ki-Duk Kim and 'Samaria Girls'!"

# Chapter 691: Declining Prosperity

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The Korean crew on Qin Guan's right side burst into cheers. The resounding hails went around the whole hall.

Luchan felt depressed.

"Where are those hillbillies from? They shouldn't be screaming during a formal ceremony!"

"Yes, they are embarrassingly noisy!"

The old men felt more comfortable. The announcement of the next award left them stupefied though.

"The winner of the Jury Award is 'Lost Embrace'!"

It was okay. They had just lost the Golden Bear. They all hugged each other in satisfaction.

The four old men went on the stage. Flowers bloomed and fell as the seasons changed. That was the law of nature. There were so many coincidences, opportunities and frustrations that filmmakers had to deal with.

They helped the film, and the film helped them. They just went on hand in hand, until they reached the end of their journey.

Qin Guan and the four old men went to a small tavern later that night to celebrate. They couldn't drink too much, because they had to continue their journey the next day.

The next morning, they said goodbye to each other at the airport and left. The people waiting for them at the other end of their journey were different. Old wives, conscientious assistants, and of course Cong Nianwei, for whom Qin Guan had to bring breakfast.

The Silver Bear was still in his bag, but his family status had not changed because of it. Qin Guan bought some eggs Benedict from a small restaurant on his way back. The fried eggs on the English muffins let out a nice smell that drifted up from the lunchbox in

his hand.

Qin Guan was drooling as he rushed up the stairs to his apartment. Sunshine filled the room, making it warm and sweet. Cong Nianwei had already gotten up, but her aroma was still lingering around the bed.

She was in the bathroom. A portion of breakfast had been left on the table for Qin Guan. It was eggs Benedict, crisp bacon and mayonnaise. There were also pancakes with crab, lobster and spinach.

Delicious food was always a priority. "I'll get started!" Qin Guan shouted towards the bathroom before picking up his knife and fork.

When he jabbed the yolk with the fork, its juices poured out and soaked the muffin. It was wonderful!

Qin Guan stuffed a large piece of muffin into his mouth. It was a perfect combination of sweet crab meat, mellow mayonnaise, tender egg and spinach.

He swallowed the muffin up fast and choked on it.

As he tried to get some water, Cong Nianwei walked out of the steamy bathroom, drying her wet hair with a towel.

They looked at each other in a funny way. Then Cong Nianwei sighed and poured a cup of coffee for Qin Guan.

"Take this."

The aromatic coffee saved Qin Guan from choking to death.

"What do you want to do today?"

Qin Guan could finally rest before the beginning of the term. He had no more urgent work to take care of.

Cong Nianwei sat down across from him leisurely and put some delicious food in her mouth before answering his question.

"Prof. Martin applied for a PhD on your behalf, so he wanted to meet with you as soon as you returned. We'll be finishing our studies in America this June after all."

Qin Guan fell into thought. He wanted to hear Cong Nianwei's opinion.

"What are your plans?"

"I can get my Master's degree easily, but it would take me a long time to apply for a PhD. My tutor told me that it would take me at least four years. Plus, my profession requires me to be close to society. Practice is more important than textbooks, so I want to do a PhD on a job. I can accumulate experience through work."

"I don't need to focus only in America. The gallery here is enough. I could take my team to any country if there is a chance there. Isn't that wonderful?"

# Chapter 692: The TIME Cover

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Qin Guan was taken aback by her answer. "It doesn't matter," he said automatically. "I know that you like studying. I'll support you no matter what."

Suddenly, a fork hit his head.

"No one can study forever, except maybe for rich people. No one can stay in college forever. I'm studying for my profession and my dream. The last part of my journey can't be achieved only by reading books though."

Qin Guan didn't get angry. Instead, he took her hand.

"I understand. You do not need to make any sacrifices for me."

"You are shameless!"

Suddenly, Cong Nianwei recalled something and smiled.

"Don't make fun of me. Think about Professor Martin and the college authorities you'll be meeting today!"

Qin Guan didn't take his tutor seriously until he sat down in the meeting room at Columbia University. The old man and the college administrators were after something.

They had a reason for being so eager. In their eyes, Qin Guan was a money-making machine, a gold-lettered billboard that could attract donations.

Qin Guan was the best person to take care of Columbia's external relations and promotion. Chinese students were becoming more and more interested in studying abroad and Columbia was eager to have a share of the pie.

As a result, the college authorities had decided to offer Qin Guan some favorable terms in his PhD application.

Qin Guan read the application form carefully. When he looked up, he found his tutor staring at him, waiting for his decision. He

handed Martin back the PhD application calmly and began to fill in the working-student doctorate application form.

Qin Guan wanted to turn down both of them, but the favors the old man had granted him during the past two years made him reconsider. He was not cruel enough to decline after all.

Working students had more spare time anyway. They didn't need to have classes in a fixed location. Besides, Qin Guan's major didn't require extensive research work. All he needed to do was read a lot. That was the best option for him.

He had to apologize to Professor Martin. The college didn't care if he chose a full-time PhD or not after all. His presence at important events was enough for the administrators.

Qin Guan finished the form amid the sound of Prof. Martin's weak roar. When he walked out of the meeting room, Martin's cry followed him out.

"You bastard! You still have six months left before you graduate! I will not grant you any leave during that period! And I'll be strict with your thesis, homework and exams! Twice as strict! Just wait and see!"

Qin Guan knew what the word "bravado" meant, and why villains liked to shout "I'll be back!" It was a powerless scream that came from their hearts.

As he walked away from the college, he suddenly sneezed. Maybe Martin had cursed him. Or maybe it was just the cold early spring breeze.

Qin Guan reached the newsstand. His schoolmates liked to visit it often, but it was past rush hours now. The diligent owner was dusting off the shelves with a feather. He must have bought it from Chinatown.

Qin Guan, who wanted to read what had happened in America during his absence, found the latest "TIME" issue on the shelf. The

striking black title on the cover had remained the same. Unlike the magazine's usual red frame though, the cover had a blue frame this time.

Qin Guan happened to know the person on it. It was him. His cover had been postponed until 2004. That explained why he hadn't been notified before.

This was actually the strategy of the chief editor, who knew about the Spring Festival in China. An Asian star on the cover during that jubilant time would increase the sales volume and influence South-East Asia.

Plans were not always able to keep up with changes though. As the editor had been about to choose Qin Guan's photo, he had heard some news from the entertainment circle. The young man's film had been shortlisted at the Berlin Film Festival once again.

The chief editor had put someone else on the cover and kept Qin Guan's photo, so he could use it after the film festival.

If Qin Guan won an award in Berlin, the headline would be "Best Actor Again". If he didn't, the title would be "Past Glory".



# Chapter 693: An American Translation Of Chinese TV Series

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The photo had to show the unprecedented splendor of the award-winning actor. Both his success and failure would be attractive to the readers.

Qin Guan had succeeded, so the title was "Best Actor Again".

He felt a little ashamed as he looked at his familiar face and the shameless title. Thanks to his strong mentality though, he was able to recover from the impact of the magazine.

The newsstand owner was counting his stock in the small room, while Qin Guan was standing in a long gray windcoat outside. He opened the magazine leisurely.

"The award-winning actor from China started his career in America."

The Americans were boasting about their own country again. If it wasn't for his films in America, the magazine wouldn't have dedicated two full pages on an Asian model.

"His acting skills are a perfect combination of oriental fineness and unrestrained occidental body language. His strong abilities and performance before the camera make him extremely charming."

"America may be the reason for his success though. If he had not come to America, he wouldn't have made a breakthrough in the film industry. In an effort to get to know the actor better, our editor had the honor of reviewing his films in China."

"Forgive me, but I laughed for an entire day. His acting skills at the time had been far from good. His lines were hard to understand, and he only portrayed supporting characters that suffered immediate death. If you are interested, you could buy some copies through your Chinese friends."

The critic must have done extensive research on Qin Guan. His Chinese sucked though. For example, "Maids In The Red Mansion" had been translated as "Maids Working In Luxurious Gardens", and "Legend Of The Swordsman" had been summed up as "A man abandoned by his first love becomes famous with the help of his noble wife".

Qin Guan burst into laughter. The author was smart enough to omit "Demi-Gods and Demi-Demons". Maybe the number of his roles had driven him mad.

Qin Guan's laughter startled the newsstand owner, who turned around in surprise. The man on the cover of the magazine was standing before him, holding that very magazine. The golden sunshine hit his shoulders. He was much more handsome than the guy in the picture.

Now the man realized why that magazine issue had become a bestseller. He suddenly recalled the comments of the readers.

It was true! The Asian star was really a student at Columbia. The students had not been boasting.

He felt warmth in his heart as he looked at Qin Guan's poster on the wall of his newsstand. Actually, he was also a fan of his. As an inarticulate man though, he had decided to express his love for his idol in a typical way.

His greatest advantage was his small stand. He started opening magazines and newspapers one by one to show Qin Guan every article there was about him.

The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The New York Post, VOGUE, Entertainment Weekly...

Thanks to his latest award, Qin Guan still had a place in the entertainment section of every newspaper and magazine. Qin Guan stopped reading and took out his wallet. He thought that the man was implying that he had been reading without buying anything.

The newsstand owner finally squeezed a few words between his teeth.

"Look! They are all praising you! No one is against you!"

Qin Guan smiled at the man and kept reading the reports.

They were not short or poorly written. The pictures and articles about him occupied entire pages.

# Chapter 694: A Warm Corner

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Americans loved to create superheroes. They considered the Berlin Film Festival to be very fair and prestigious, so they tried their best to pull Qin Guan to their own camp.

"The Berlin Film Festival was the first to open in 2004. Its hasty beginning didn't harm its content by any means" - The New York Times

"Good films attract public attention in every country, but Berlin favors Qin Guan. His second award was very easy to get..." - The Los Angeles Times

Qin Guan's character was outstanding compared to indie film characters from other countries. Everyone could see that, even if indie films were not their expertise.

Thanks to the newsstand owner, Qin Guan didn't find any negative feedback about his performance. Considering the evaluation of the mainstream media, he could look forward to even more positive responses.

Qin Guan put down the last magazine and gave the eager man a bill.

"Thanks a lot. One copy of TIME."

This was a milestone for him, so he needed a souvenir.

The man waved away the bill, as if he was insulted by it.

"Why would you pay me?"

Why not? You are a businessman, not a philanthropist. Plus, I'm not a robber.

Suddenly, Qin Guan understood and smiled at the man. Then he took out his phone and stood right next to him.

"Come on! Look at the camera! Three, two, one... Cheese!"

Their faces were captured in the photo for eternity.

"I'll upload it to my blog. I can send it to you by email."

"Oh, okay!"

The man came back to his senses and gave Qin Guan his email excitedly. I'll be your loyal fan from now on.

Suddenly, the man saw a small piece of paper shoved in another copy of TIME. He spread it and saw that it was a five-dollar bill. That was the exact price of the magazine.

He put the cash in his pocket with misty eyes. He would save it for his collection.

Qin Guan returned home in a good mood and sent the photo to his firm. Then he got a short message from Sister Qu, telling him that his community service ad had been broadcast on every TV station in New York.

Thanks to its social impact, the City Hall and the New York Police decided to give Qin Guan a Community Service Innovation Award in 2004. He was not the first Asian to get a medal from the City Hall or the police, but this was the first time he would be getting an award that was irrelevant to the fashion and entertainment industry.

Qin Guan wanted to share this honor with the person closest to him.

"Aren't you happy when you are able to help others, Wei? People like and admire me, which makes me really happy."

Cong Nianwei was surprised. Does this mean that he will engage in charity now?

Reading her expression, Qin Guan hastened to add, "No, no! There are all kinds of charity. Donations are useful, but personal labor is even better. I like being needed!"

He was still a money-grubber.

Cong Nianwei adjusted her posture on the couch and replied casually, "It won't be hard. You are a public figure now, so more and more charities will approach you after this advertisement. Thanks to your social status, your face attracts donations. Don't worry, the money will just start flowing in."

"You could have a talk with your agent though. If your schedule allows it, you could accept more voluntary work."

Qin Guan nodded. Cong Nianwei's next words strengthened his resolve.

"Besides, this will make you even more popular. Community service ads are much more relatable than luxury product ads. You could show off your personal charm that way."

Qin Guan was happy with Cong Nianwei's plan. His girlfriend could conquer the world with her high IQ. Qin Guan kissed Cong Nianwei on the face as a commercial break started on TV.

After an unscrupulous bombing of commercial ads, Qin Guan's first public-interest ad aired.

# Chapter 695: Serving The Country

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The advertisement began with an exciting drum beat. Qin Guan nearly collapsed on the couch. The edited clip made him regret accepting the job.

After the rhythmic beat, a messy site that looked like it had just survived a typhoon appeared on TV. A serious voice delivered a pained speech.

"If there were no hard-working community service volunteers around us..."

"If there was no interest in the common good..."

"Then this miserable scene would be America's future."

Qin Guan and Cong Nianwei felt terribly awkward as they watched the advertisement. They both had a different response to the next scene.

"If you are smart enough though, you will act just as he is."

The camera slowly zoomed in on the library. Qin Guan grinned at the audience, revealing his white teeth. His face, which occupied the whole screen, looked very honest.

"You can help children with their homework..."

"You can clean the park and enjoy the fresh air..."

The sweat on Qin Guan's forehead shone brightly on the screen.

His big smiling face was shown again and again at the end of each scene to impress the audience. Cong Nianwei started laughing and rolling around on the couch the second time she saw his face.

The short snappy ads felt as long as TV family dramas to Qin Guan.

When he finished packing products and showed his white teeth for the last time, the kind cameraman finally let him go.

The whole advertisement went exactly like this,

"You are wondering how to perform community service? Just look at Qin Guan's smile!"

"We all need to volunteer for our community. Just look at Qin Guan's smile!"

The ad was simple and smooth. The post-production crew was feeling regretful though. Given enough time, they would have enhanced Qin Guan's white teeth at least five times.

Cong Nianwei was laughing to death. Qin Guan was stupefied and sceptical, but every American had watched the proactive advertisement.

Qu Xuemei, who took pleasure in Qin Guan's misfortune, uploaded the advertisement to his blog so Qin Guan's fans could see this unusual side of their idol.

Qin Guan turned on his computer hastily, worried about getting negative feedback. The discussion in the public forum confused him though.

"He is an award-winning actor indeed."

"That was some wonderful acting! It was really close to real life."

"According to my analysis, he used at least three different acting methods in the ad."

Qin Guan himself had no idea he had done that.

"Qin Guan satisfied his fans with his perfect looks."

"I wonder if I could get electrocuted by kissing the screen. I sure want to try!"

"His face is the size of a real person. I took a picture next to the TV."

Everybody focused on Qin Guan's looks. No one paid any attention to the details.



Armani's response made Qin Guan relax.

"Yes." It was concise and comprehensive, without any sign of reproach.

Actually, Qin Guan was afraid that fashion designers would look down on him.

Fortunately, all brand managers congratulated him. There was no criticism whatsoever. Otherwise, fashion magazines would be sneering at his performance the very next day.

Qin Guan had been thinking too much. If this had been a commercial product, all famous brands would have deserted him. This was a public-interest ad organized by the local government though. The words "public-interest" and "government" were considered good in the fashion circle, as was the support of such causes.

Qin Guan was praised consistently online. It was both funny and annoying. Qin Guan had to vent his anger on his girlfriend. Cong Nianwei closed the door of the bedroom with a cry. The Silver Bear was left on the table, the other awards on the shelf looking at it arrogantly.

After having some fun with his girlfriend, Qin Guan met the smiling principal at the dean's office the next day.

Thanks to the public-interest ad and the donations the government had received for community construction and service, the New York City Hall had decided to award Qin Guan a Community Service Innovation Medal.

That medal was awarded to upstanding citizens like Qin Guan. After negotiating with Columbia, it had been decided that the college's anniversary celebration and the award ceremony would be held during the same period.

# Chapter 696: An Important Award Ceremony

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School anniversaries in America were quite different than they were in China. The foundation dates of Chinese colleges were recorded very carefully. The day of the anniversary, college alumni visited from all directions and the school authorities invited capable and important students to attend the ceremony as guests of honor.

In America, school anniversaries were so low-key that Ivy League students didn't even know about them.

Columbia attached great importance to the event, but due to the fact that each department was independent, the schedule was unfortunately delayed.

Qin Guan was surprised by the paperwork the principal gave him. When he read through the program, he was stupefied. The event would last a whole year, starting from April. Was that really a school anniversary?

Xu Xiaoxiao, who was standing right next to him, remained calm. Columbia was a college that focused on the practical application of knowledge, so the school anniversary was actually a way to re-integrate resources from its students. It would take a long time for the school authorities to bring together the college's students from all over the world.

They would have to look back to the past before they looked ahead to the future. College activities would help them find a sense of belonging and opportunity, so that all their powers could be woven into an unbreakable rope.

As the news spread, the different departments began to plan events fast. Some older students had already showed up at some departments. Of course, the university itself wouldn't just stand by

idly. They started planning activities that would suit both refined and mainstream tastes.

The academic circle, which was in charge of the most serious part of the celebration, invited many scholars, including Nobel winners, to give lectures in public halls. There was a lecture by a top scholar of a different scientific field every week.

The school authorities gave more thought to the entertaining part of the festivities. They united the nearest communities and organized cultural activities like festivals, carnivals, jazz concerts, health fairs, movie projections and dances.

All of these events were a joint effort of students from different departments. As one of those students, Qin Guan played an important role in the ceremony.

His award ceremony was closely connected to those events after all. Qin Quan felt like an alien among the serious graduates. He was the mascot of Columbia, a glittering, gleaming fortune cat that attracted donations.

As a result, the school authorities asked him to attend at least one more activity besides the award ceremony.

Qin Guan just chose a random colorful envelope from the principal's hand. To him, they were all the same.

"The white one seems simpler."

He had to be good at answering multiple-choice questions.

Xu was filled with hope. As Qin Guan took the paper out of the envelope slowly, he urged him enthusiastically.

"Dance! Dance!" He had been longing to watch some beautiful dancers.

His wish was not granted though. Qin Guan spread the paper out and read the black letters. It was a stand post at a health fair. It was actually number six, which the Chinese considered a lucky

number.

I like trading.

Qin Guan confirmed the date and time with the principal before leaving happily. Xu had to sit down on a bench. His limbs felt suddenly very weak.

He could almost see the dancers' miniskirts and long legs fade away in the distance. He would have to spend his day with annoying children, angry fathers and fat housewives.

American families liked fairs, because they could buy all kinds of cheap things and snacks there. It was their favorite kind of party. To Qin Guan, it sounded a lot like a modern version of Chinese countryside fairs.

He actually liked that option. "You should be happy. This is much better than a children's carnival after all..." he tried to comfort his sad friend.

The thought of those crazy kids made Xu feel much better.

Time flew by as they prepared for the fair. April arrived quietly.

It was a sunny day, and the whole street beside Columbia University was filled with flowers and balloons. Posters of Qin Guan could be seen everywhere. He would be the day's hero.

A group of policemen had showed up at the site early in the morning. Henry was standing among them in a formal uniform, his numerous medals decorating his chest. They were sparkling in the sunshine.

The official spokesman of Columbia University and host of the award ceremony was a New York senator. That explained why the college authorities had asked him to host the event.

# Chapter 697: Internal Conflict

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Good friends, schoolmates and fans of Qin Guan had gathered under the stage. They silently watched the speaker give a solemn introduction about Qin Guan's glory.

Although it was not an important award, it was significant for the Asian students of the university, as it gave them a sense of belonging and identity in the city of New York.

The man on the stage was their representative in their fight for justice.

The host finished his speech, which was excellent in both intonation and emotion. This was nothing for an American politician. In that country, people had to speak so well that their speeches sounded as pleasant as songs.

That year, there would be a presidential election. Gunpowder smoke had already appeared in all big cities. Henry and four other policemen stood up, holding an exquisite black box, and waited for Qin Guan on the stage.

Qin Guan fixed his tie. As a member of the fashion circle, he had consulted his stylist before the event. He was wearing a gray spring suit that radiated with vigor.

His tie, which was the exact same color, showed the importance he attached to the ceremony.

In other words, he looked perfect. He definitely deserved the film the reporters were spending on him.

"The winner of the 2004 award is Qin Guan! Congratulations!"

Qin Guan walked to the center of the stage. Henry pinned the small star-like medal on his chest. The reporters rushed up to the stage like crazy.

The two men on the stage shook hands.

"Well done, Qin Guan!" shouted the Chinese students.

"Qin Guan! Look over here!"

"Henry, Senator Lee, could you please get closer?" the reporters shouted at them.

The three men stood next to each other shoulder to shoulder to take a formal group photo. When Qin Guan got off the stage, he massaged his stiff face.

What the hell are they doing? This short ceremony is more tiring than a runway show! It seems like I'm not cut out for politics. Life before cameras is really terrible!

When he reached the backstage area, Qin Guan took off the medal carefully and put it back in its black case. Then he noticed the policemen leaving with Henry.

Henry's black car took off first. The other four policemen approached their motorcycles, putting on their white helmets. Qin Guan's eyeballs nearly fell out of their sockets.

He saw four different flags on the motorcycles, each one for a separate martial arts club. They all had a different color and logo. When the motorcycles roared to life, the flags spread in the breeze attractively.

Xu Xiaoxiao was familiar with this, and so were the city residents.

"After your performance, martial artists received an invitation from police stations all over America," Xu explained to his friend patiently. "People in power are good friends with Chinese masters."

"You know about the conflicts amid the traditional Chinese martial arts system. No school will ever surrender to another school. As a result, there are also different schools among American policemen. Martial arts fans consider their school their responsibility. They patrol the city with their logo to attract

students for their school."

Qin Guan nearly burst into laughter. "What about Master Guolin?" he asked on second thought.

Xu patted his thighs excitedly. "The night he returned to the temple, he found a crowd gathered outside the gate. Americans had surrounded the temple. They kowtowed together before Master Guolin and elected a guy who spoke fluent Chinese to negotiate with him."

"It was so funny! Master Guolin likes to keep a low profile though. If he didn't, there would be Buddha bumper stickers on police cruisers all over the city."

Qin Guan shivered at the thought. If arhats filled the streets...

He hit Xu over the head. "Do you have enough free time to laugh at others? Just focus on your own task!"

Their task was arduous. The community fair was launched ceremoniously at the border between the campus and the community. The fair used Columbia's emblem as its symbol.

# Chapter 698: The Sales King Of The Fair

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As a successful businessman who had started from nothing, Qin Guan was familiar with trading. If he'd brought products from his gallery there, not only would he have sold nothing, but his reputation would also have been affected. Selling snacks was the best choice for a fair.

Americans loved soft cotton candy, hot dogs, candy apples and fried food. These snacks were also popular among kids.

That was not enough for Qin Guan though. If he just sold those snacks at the fair, he would be just like the other pedlars. In order to become the king of sales and get an award from Columbia, he needed to explore new ways.

He had to sell Chinese food.

A white minibus from Xu's restaurant pulled up to Qin Guan's stand, revealing its true nature. The ingredients were sealed in different boxes, but their secret weapon was actually the large iron-plate cart.

Qin Guan lit up the small gas stove, which was the favorite tool of Chinese pedlars. Buns made by cooks from Tianjin were already in the steamer, and smooth, elastic noodles were boiling in the pot.

When the ticket office at the entrance opened, visitors began to pour in.

Adults had to pay one dollar, but kids could enter for free. The reasonable price encouraged the residents of the area and the students to visit the fair. Qin Guan put on an apron with the picture of a puppy and welcomed the customers.

He poured peanut oil from a mineral water bottle onto the burning iron plate. Pedlars considered this better than an oil can, because it saved oil and was way easier to handle.

Qin Guan started breaking eggs one by one with his other hand



and spreading them onto the iron plate. He used a small spatula to flip them quickly. The sound and smell, as well as Qin Guan's elegant movements, attracted people's attention.

Sweet Guangdong sausage, grapes, soy sauce... He served a portion of fried noodles fast. It only cost six dollars, which was an extra reason for Americans to buy it.

"One portion!" the first customer ordered, pointing to the boiling noodles inside the pot.

"No problem. One minute!"

Qin Guan put the noodles in a lunch box with the spatula. The box was nearly full. The customer took the noodles and chopsticks with trembling hands. He suddenly realized that everyone around him was looking at him.

He stuffed some noodles into his mouth and then buried his face into the box with sparkling eyes, paying no attention to the surrounding noise.

Everyone was anxious. It was terrible to watch others eat when one was hungry. Some impatient people shouted at him, "Hey, bro! Stop eating and tell us how it tastes!"

"Yes, you are really selfish!"

Annoyed, the man roared at them, "Can't you f\*cking see?"

At his words, everyone lined up before the stand as fast as they could. Qin Guan was up to his neck in work, while Cong Nianwei was busy collecting the money. The couple's stand was selling food like crazy.

Meanwhile, Xu Xiaoxiao, who was affected deeply by his life in Chinatown, served as a waiter and PR assistant. The three of them cooperated well. In half a day, all their food had been sold out. There were only two pieces of ginger left in a box.

Qin Guan was so tired that he couldn't even lift his arms up. The

number of portions he had served had pushed him to his limit. He was not a pedlar working at the night market anymore.

It was hard to transition from a rich life to the life of a commoner!

The money made up for it though. He had earned about 1,000 dollars in one day.

Night fell. As all the stand owners began cleaning up, Qin Guan's stand won the Best Sales Award. The prize was equal to the stand's total income that day. This meant that Qin Guan's team got paid double.

Qin Guan felt as if a delicious pie had fallen down from Heaven for him to eat. The dollar bills swept his tiredness away. He was really excited.

# Chapter 699: A High-Risk Advertisement

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When they returned home, Qin Guan realized how smooth their adventure at the fair had gone. He had surprisingly not been surrounded by fans, even though the fair had been held at a public area. He caressed his face. Is my skin rough from frying all those noodles?

He had actually overestimated his looks. The delicious food had surpassed his appeal. Chinese food had been the true winner that day! All the customers had focused on the food rather than the cook.

After resting for a few days, Qu called Qin Guan to her office. He had just sat down on the couch, when she threw a large package of chocolate at him.

"I just returned to New York. Is there some kind of job you want to discuss. or did you just want to give me this chocolate?"

Qin Guan took a piece of chocolate and stuffed it into his mouth.

Qu nodded. "You are kind of right. I reviewed your schedule for this year. You have not agreed to any film or TV series, home or abroad. Foreign investors are waiting for your two films to be released in America, but those movie scripts are not good enough."

"Besides, you are going to graduate this year. You'll be really busy studying, but that's no excuse for you to slow down. People get lazy when they rest too much, so I found an easy job for you that will keep you camera-ready."

You just want the money. Qin Guan held his words back and smiled at her.

"No problem. I like advertisements. A lot of money, not much work. You are a good agent. So what is it?"

Qu pointed to the case in his embrace. It was full of Nestle KIT KAT bars.

Nestle was a Swiss brand that ranked third after Mondelez and Mars. However, it was not just a company that produced chocolate. It was actually the largest food manufacturer in the world and one of the 500 top global enterprises.

This was the first time Qin Guan would be shooting an ad for fast-moving goods. Although it was only one Nestle product, it could be considered positive feedback. Qin Guan had become a trend-setter among top luxury brands, so the people in that circle liked him.

The tentative olive branch thrown by Nestle was a form of approval from the global consumer market, which was a good sign. If Qin Guan satisfied Nestle, offers from other retail businesses would start coming in in waves.

Qin Guan smiled at the thought. "When shall we begin?"

"That's up to you."

"Okay! Right now!"

Qin Guan put all the single packages in his pocket and left the large box on Qu's desk. Snacks with high calories were necessary for physical work.

He was thinking like a redneck. A big firm like Nestle wouldn't get stingy about food.

Only when he reached the advertising company with Qu, did he realize his mistake. Besides his salary for the advertisement, Nestle would also provide him with a supply of its own products for a year. The big company was very generous.

In an effort to return the favor, Qin Guan read the ad scripts carefully.

He actually had to shoot several ads. Luxury brands could use one ad for an entire year, but everyday products needed a repeating series of advertisements in order to increase their sales volume.

Qin Guan had to finish all the ads in a short time. That was nothing for him. He was just surprised by one of the ad scripts in particular.

"I will need to work with squirrels?"

He still recalled his miserable adventure on Tasha Tudor's farm.

"Yes, it's a cute idea. We trained 46 squirrels especially for the ad," a staff member of the advertising agency explained patiently.

46! Not 4, not 6... 46! That's a whole battalion of squirrels! Who cares if they are trained? Qin Guan forced a smile.

"Is there any other problem?"

"No, no!" Qin Guan said. He handed one of the scripts to the man. "We could start with this one."

The man took the script and held back his breath. Parkour? He must be crazy!

"This is a little dangerous. It'll be hard for you to study the movements. Besides, you could easily get hurt during the shooting. If the rest of the ads were delayed by an accident, both you and Nestle would suffer from it."

# Chapter 700: The Crazy Building-Jumping Hero

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Qin Guan knew that the kind-hearted man was worried about him, but he had no idea how dangerous squirrels could be. Qin Guan smiled at the man. I have to convince him...

He stood up and put both hands on the desk. Then he jumped up and performed an elegant, effortless handstand. He pushed the table hard to pull a perfect backward somersault and land on the floor. Finally, he stretched his hand out towards the stupefied man.

"Shall we do it then?"

"Yes!" the man answered in a trembling voice.

He was so satisfied with Qin Guan's professional performance, that he led him to the fitting room right away.

Qin Guan's costume was a simple T-shirt and a pair of sweatpants. His OLLO trainers, which had been designed especially for parkour, weighed only 200 grams. Qin Guan's toes could move freely inside the shoes.

Their non-existent soles allowed the wearer to run without making a sound. They could also withstand a huge impact if one fell down.

Qin Guan was really interested in his equipment. Naturally, Nestle hadn't been stingy about the shoes.

Qin Guan changed clothes and walked to the set with the filming team. It was an ordinary apartment block with several villas visible on the hillside not far away.

Qin Guan had to make use of everything in order to reach the ground safely. His tutor, David, was a French parkour expert. He was actually the founder of the sport and a trained soldier.

His strong muscles made him feel contempt for the weak Adonis next to him. He helplessly tried to explain to Qin Guan how to jump over the obstacles elegantly. In his opinion, parkour could help people survive earthquakes, fire hazards and other natural disasters, yet those Yankees only used it to show off.

David could have killed the Asian Adonis twice in under one minute. The boy seemed casual and annoyed. David didn't think he could learn anything in such a short time. The team would have to find a body double for him and take some photos of his silly smile as he ate chocolate. That would be the best option.

David jumped up and down between different floors, rolling and walking along narrow paths. This would be hard even for a veteran, if they were unfamiliar with the conditions, let alone a rookie that had never tried parkour before.

Qin Guan memorized his movements and analyzed the building. He knew where the wires and guard bars were. That would be the best path to follow. When David fell to the ground, Qin Guan completed the map in his mind.

The fact that he kept looking up made David and the rest of the crew think that he had been shocked by his performance.

The man from the advertising agency walked up to Qin Guan and patted him on the shoulder in comfort. Qin Guan was the protagonist of the ad after all, not David.

"He may have invented the sport, but I trust you. A body double is on standby, so you don't need to worry."

Qin Guan replied with a splendid smile. "No problem. I'll give it a try."

The man coughed loudly. Calm down, young man.

Everyone had heard Qin Guan's response. David turned up his nose, while Qu sat down by the road slowly. Suddenly, she shouted at the stunned man, "What are you looking at me for? He is up

there! Move!"

The crew turned around and saw Qin Guan disappear down the corridor. In one minute, he was waving at everybody from the fourth floor.

"Camera... Full scene!"

Cold sweat covered the director's forehead. "Are all the safety measures in place?" he asked the prop master. "Okay, thanks!" Before they could finish their job, Qin Guan suddenly took action.



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